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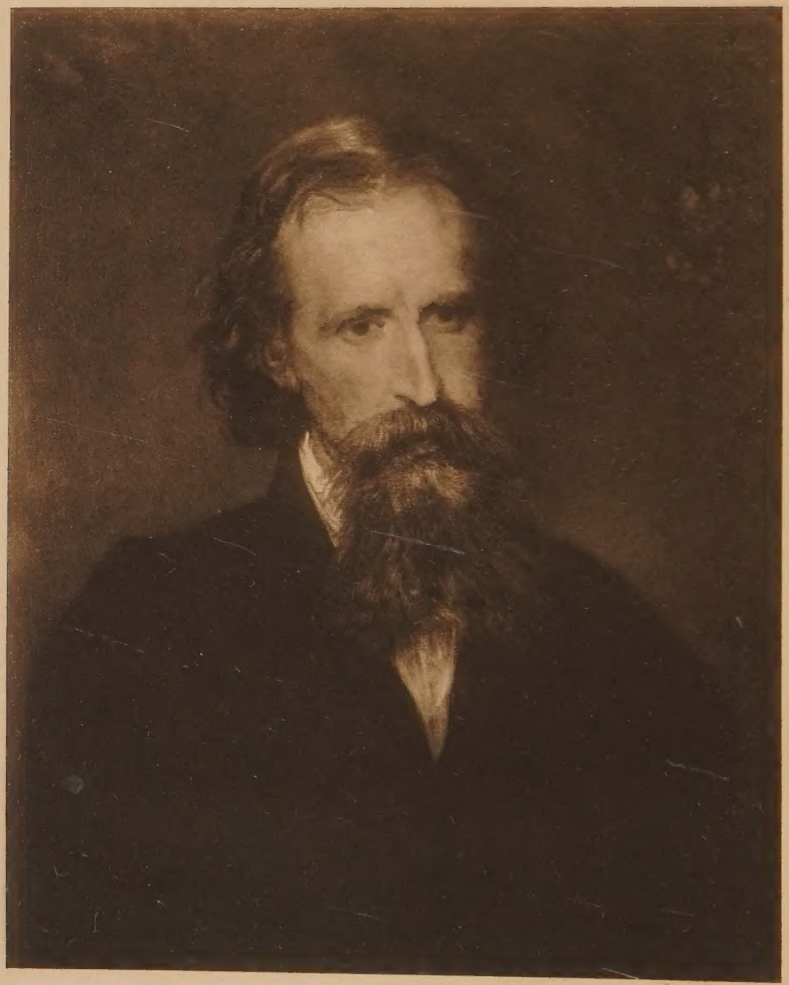
THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF

LESLIE STEPHEN



Emery Walker Ph. Sc.

Leslie Stephen
from a painting by G. F. Watts, R.A.

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF
LESLIE STEPHEN

BY FREDERIC WILLIAM MAITLAND

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PREFACE

LESLIE STEPHEN left behind him many and good friends. Sixty at least of them have helped me in the making of this book. Some have supplied information, some have lent letters, some have written sentences or paragraphs which with due acknowledgment will appear hereafter. I hope and believe that I have thanked all of them severally and in private for their kindness and courtesy. If now in thanking them jointly and in public I do not name them, that is partly because they are so many, and partly because a prefatory parade of their names might raise hopes that this book will not fulfil.

F. W. M.

CAMBRIDGE, *October* 1906

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to write 'a short article or "appreciation" or a notice in a biographical dictionary.' He added: 'He, as I always feel, understands me.' When his death was very near, he wrote with pencil in a little book that he kept by his bedside for his children to read the following words: 'Any sort of "life" of me is impossible, if only for the want of materials. Nor should I like you to help anybody to say anything except . . . Maitland. He might write a short article or so . . . and if he liked to do so, you should show him my "letter" to you.'

I feel then that I am doing not only what I should in any case have wished (though I might not have been bold enough) to do, but also what I have been asked to do if I endeavour to tell a little more of Leslie Stephen than is apparent in his books. At the same time, I feel that in writing so much as I propose to write, I shall go beyond, though certainly I shall not transgress, the letter of his expressed wish; and it seems well for me to say why this is done. That 'short article or so' about somebody else he could have written to perfection; but I cannot write it even imperfectly. The powers, natural and acquired, which enabled him to sum up a long life in a few pages, to analyse a character in a few sentences, are not at my disposal, nor did I observe Stephen as some expert in psychology, or as some heaven-born novelist might have observed him. If I am to write of him at all, I must use other words and other eyes than mine, more especially his own—which means that I shall copy a good many extracts from his letters, and report what has been told me by his sister, his children, his pupils, and his friends. I do not think that the public will be entitled to complain if it gets some first-hand evidence instead of my epitome of it, and if Stephen himself saw the 'short article or so' swelling to the size of a book, he would shake his head, it is true, but he would acquit me of anything worse than clumsiness and verbosity.

I think it well to add that the 'want of materials' was not the only reason that he gave when he said that his life could not be written. He also said that he did not care to tell everything even to those who were dearest to him. He would, however, have been the first to admit that a biographer rarely

penetrates far below the surface, and that he yet performs a useful office if he is fairly diligent, moderately intelligent, and scrupulously sincere. Perhaps I am at this moment but too scrupulously sincere; and in order that no false impression may be left by what has just been said, I make haste to add that not only have I nothing to conceal about Leslie Stephen, but that he had nothing to conceal about himself. Only he did not think himself interesting. In the 'letter' which has already been mentioned stands the following passage, and it is characteristic of the man who wrote it: 'I wish to write mainly about your mother. But I find that in order to speak intelligibly it will be best to begin by saying something about myself. It may interest you and will make the main story clearer. Now, I have no intention of writing autobiography except in this incidental way. One reason is that my memory for facts is far from a good one, and that I really remember very few incidents that are at all worth telling. Another reason is that I could give you none of those narratives of inward events, conversions, or spiritual crises which give interest to some autobiographies. I was amused lately by reading Horatio Brown's life of Symonds, virtually an autobiography, and reflecting how little of the same kind of internal history could be told of me.' No, he did not think himself interesting, and if, like other people, he had had an internal history, he was not going to 'bore' (as he would have said) other people with it—not even his children.

This means, so it seems to me, that with all his many accomplishments Stephen would not have been in all respects a good autobiographer. Also it may serve to give a not unnecessary warning to those who would interpret the various scraps and snatches of autobiography that are scattered about in his writings. To put that warning into a more explicit shape may seem impolitic, for it is to suggest that there are some who are not quick to detect irony and humour wherever they are present. Still we occasionally have to remember that we live in a very solemn world. Shall I illustrate this painful truth? Stephen wrote an article on George Eliot in the 'Dictionary of National Biography,' and, in giving his

judgment of 'Romola,' said that, while the other personages were scarcely alive, Tito was one of the author's 'finest feminine characters.' Thereupon, in a weighty newspaper, a critic surmised that 'Tito' was a misprint for 'Romola.' Where such criticism is possible we ought to be serious, and I cannot claim for Stephen that he was always serious. In particular I cannot claim that he was always serious when he spoke of himself and his doings. Some pages might, I fear, be filled with statements of his which are by no means literally true. To take a few examples, we might extract from one passage the fact that for flowers he cared so little that he could hardly tell a poppy from a tulip; whereas, in truth, not only did he love flowers, especially certain flowers which spoke to him of those whom he had lost, but also he had made himself, so a high authority tells me, 'a very fair British field botanist,' and friends of his who rambled with him in Cornwall have had to regret that conversation was sometimes interrupted by the discovery of a rare little plant upon a wall or in the hedgerow. Or again, if we took him at his word, we might believe that, with the exception of one of his uncles, his whole family was 'incapable of distinguishing a horse from a cow'; whereas, in truth, before he went to college, he himself had done a good deal more riding than falls to the lot of most boys of his age and station. And so he would say that, having had the advantage of an education at an English public school and university, he knew nothing about science; but those who have laid stress upon this phrase should have remembered that men who knew nothing about any kind of science did not become good 'wranglers' even fifty years ago. Indeed, at times if you adhered to the letter of Stephen's words, you would believe that he had sometimes looked at a few books, that he had now and then scribbled for the newspapers, and that, by way of relaxation from this fatiguing toil, he had strolled across some rising ground in the neighbourhood of Grindelwald or Zermatt. But solemn though this world may be, I should be needlessly insulting my readers if in the spirit of a scholiast I asked them to observe the irony of one sentence, the humour of another, or the art with which Stephen effaced,

or seemed to efface, himself, even when he was writing the life of his brother Fitzjames or of his friend Fawcett. It is more to my purpose to remark that behind the irony and the humour and the artistic self-effacement there was unaffected modesty: an estimate of his own powers and achievements which, if it seemed to some of us absurdly low, was none the less unquestionably genuine. When he was editing the biographical dictionary, it gave him, as I know, real pain to run his pen through honest work and to explain to a contributor, especially if he were a young contributor, that some forgotten worthy was only worthy of a column and a half, not of the two columns that had been reared to his memory. It would have been without pain, but not without strong language, that he would have reduced a reasonably full article on 'Stephen, Leslie, man of letters,' until it was a brief string of curt phrases—'third son of Sir James Stephen (*q. v.*) . . . educated at Eton and Trinity Hall . . . owing to some religious scruples he resigned the tutorship . . . became editor of the *Cornhill* and afterwards of this Dictionary . . . climbed the Schreckhorn,' and so forth; but I am not sure that even the Schreckhorn would not have been suppressed. Near the end of his life he consented, under great pressure, to write some Reminiscences, or rather to report some 'Early Impressions.'[1] Men who did not know him have called them delightful, and delightful they seem to me. I hope that hereafter they may be republished in some volume of Remains. But even at this last moment when he might have claimed the rights which old age and abundant honours can confer, Sir Leslie could not be induced to say much about himself. He had met some interesting people—Carlyle and Ruskin, Tennyson and Arnold, Darwin and Huxley—and about them he would chat for a while, if anybody really cared to hear him; but as to himself—well, he was not interesting.

Other 'reminiscences' he had, but they were not for the public—or rather, not reminiscences but ever-present memories which in his last years were, if I judge rightly, the core of his being. When he said that I understood him, he certainly did

[1] *National Review*, September, October, November, December 1903.

not mean to ascribe to me any unusual insight ; but rather he meant that it had been my privilege to see both in joy and sorrow a certain side or aspect of Leslie Stephen that was only visible to a few. Without what he would have felt to be sacrilege, he could not have told to the world what he felt to be the real story of his life. What he could make known to people in general would not, so he thought, be interesting to them, because it was so little interesting to him. That is not my own view, and I have some hope that without raising a veil, which hides nothing that is not honourable and beautiful, I may, by means of letters and diaries, and with the help of his kindred and friends, add a little to the pleasure of those who are fond of their hours in a library, enjoy the playground of Europe and do not shrink from a little free-thinking and plain-speaking.

Two things I shall not do. It would be idle for me to describe the contents of Stephen's books, for he rarely wrote an obscure page or a dull line ; and I shall not criticise his books, for I do not possess and cannot now acquire the requisite knowledge or the requisite taste. If, as I doubt not, he has left worthy successors, some one will some day do for him what he to our admiration did for many others : illustrate in a small compass his life by his books, his books by his life, and both by their environment. Meanwhile here are some materials.

II

PARENTAGE

Of Leslie Stephen's ancestry little need be said. He spoke of it at some length when he wrote the life of his brother, Fitzjames, and it would be ill gleaning where he has reaped. Few of those 'rivulets which help to compose the great current of national life' have been better described, and few perhaps were better worth describing, than that which had its origin in a certain James Stephen (*c.* 1733–1779), whom we might call James Stephen I., and who, proceeding from Aberdeenshire, made his home in England. On many a page in the catalogue at the British Museum his progeny have left their mark, for, whatever else a true Stephen might do, he would at all events publish some book or at least some pamphlet for the instruction of his fellow men. Solid and sober, for the more part, were the works of the Stephens: grave legal treatises—for theirs was pre-eminently a family of the long robe—or else pamphlets dealing argumentatively with some matter of public importance. We might amuse ourselves for a moment by suppressing the names of authors, and supposing that books begat books without human aid. Then taking one of Leslie's books, for instance, the 'History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century,' and ascending the direct male line, we might say that it was the son of 'Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography,' which was the son of 'War in Disguise,' which was the son of 'Considerations on Imprisonment for Debt.' We might say that it was the brother of 'Liberty, Equality and Fraternity,' and of the 'History of Criminal Law'; the brother also of 'Quaker Strongholds.' We might say that it was the nephew of a classical treatise on Pleading: the nephew also of a very miscellaneous batch of books, including a novel,

'The Jesuit at Cambridge': the uncle of 'Lapsus Calami,' and —but the law books are too numerous to mention. Then, if we desert the agnatic lines, we observe that the 'Science of Ethics' is the grandchild of many sermons, the great-grandchild of the 'Complete Duty of Man,' the great-great-grandchild of 'The Eternity of Hell Torments asserted,'[1] the first cousin of the 'Logic of Chance,' the first cousin also of the 'Law of the Constitution,' and, while we are about it, we may add—for affinity also is important—that the 'Playground of Europe' is the brother-in-law of 'Old Kensington' and the son-in-law of 'Vanity Fair.'

James Stephen I., being himself a prisoner for debt, made himself somewhat notorious by declaiming against imprisonment for debt, organising an insurrectionary movement in the gaol, and wrangling with the King's judges. When he was once more a free man, the Benchers of the Middle Temple refused to call him to the Bar owing to his 'want of birth, want of fortune, want of education, and want of temper.' Exactly how many of his descendants have done judgment and justice upon mankind from benches more or less exalted in England, Australia and India it would be long to tell. Seven, at the very least, of them have been knighted; two of them were Privy Councillors. They were a strenuous race. Hot tempers we may discern in some instances and sensitive nerves in others; but always there is a certain strenuousness, a certain greediness for work, and not infrequently there is devotion to some cause, a doctrine to be delivered, a crusade to be preached.

Leslie's grandfather, James Stephen II. (1758–1832), became a Member of Parliament and a Master in Chancery, and devoted his abundant energy and oratorical power to the crusade against negro slavery. His children proceeded from a first wife, but he married as a second wife Wilberforce's sister and became one of Wilberforce's closest allies. Also he was a prominent member of the Evangelical Party. The quarrel with negro slavery became an hereditary feud and outlived its connexion with evangelical principles. It broke out for a last time when Leslie, a young clergyman troubled in his faith, tried to teach

[1] *See* Venn: 'Annals of a Clerical Family,' p. 61.

a not too teachable public the true meaning of the civil war in America ; and the glorious end of that story is a speech in praise of James Russell Lowell, pronounced in the Chapter House at Westminster, by one whose voice had not lately been heard in sacred buildings. 'He wrote war-songs for a crusade against the monstrous evil which was offending the helpless and sapping the moral strength of a nation.' Ancestral Stephens might applaud these words.

James Stephen II. died a few weeks before Leslie was born in the year of the Reform Bill. Of James Stephen III. (1789–1859) a litttle more, though only a little more, must be said. Both of his distinguished sons, Fitzjames and Leslie, wrote something about his life. Both thought of writing more, but abandoned the project for a reason that will be apparent hereafter. Very briefly we will run over the main facts. The Rt. Hon. Sir James Stephen, K.C.B., for so we might call him by anticipation, was born in 1789, was sent to various private schools and afterwards to Trinity Hall, where, according to his own account, he learnt very little. He took the degree of bachelor of law in 1812, having been called to the Bar in 1811. In 1813 he was appointed counsel to the Colonial Office, and in a few years he was making a professional income highly creditable to so young a man. On December 22, 1814, he married Jane Catherine, daughter of John Venn, Rector of Clapham. Five children were born to them : Herbert Venn was born in 1822 and died when he was twenty-four years old ; a daughter, Frances Wilberforce, was born in 1824, but died in infancy ; the future Sir James Fitzjames was born in 1829 ; the future Sir Leslie in 1832 ; Caroline Emelia in 1834.

But we must return to the father. In 1825 he became permanent counsel to the Board of Trade as well as the Colonial Office, and abandoned his private practice. In 1834 he was appointed Assistant Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, and in 1836 Under-Secretary. One powerful motive for the choice of an official career—which was not, so I gather, altogether congenial to him, and which involved some loss of income—was a desire to influence the action of the British Government in the matter of slavery. The result, however,

was that for some years momentous in British history he, in the words of his colleague, Sir Henry Taylor, 'virtually ruled the colonial empire.'[1] Secretaries of State for the Colonies—'my bird-of-passage masters,' as he called them—came and went in those days with great rapidity, and some of them when they took office were, so it was currently said, sadly to seek in the geography of the empire; but 'King Stephen,' or 'Mr. Over-Secretary Stephen,' remained at his post, working long hours and without a holiday. To say just what he did and just what he did not—when his advice prevailed with those 'birds-of-passage' and when it was overruled—would probably be impossible, even for one who should ransack the archives of the Colonial Office. We find that on one occasion his friend Charles Greville, the diarist, who was by way of knowing the knowable and a little more, could not profess to apportion the shares that were due to the Cabinet as a whole, to Lord Glenelg in particular, and to Mr. Stephen in the conduct of certain Canadian affairs.[2] This was the reason why Mr. Stephen's sons were compelled to say less than they might have wished of a father whom they greatly admired.

Unremitting labour in his office, relieved only by the study of ecclesiastical history and the composition of articles for the *Edinburgh Review*, was more than the strength of this naturally strong man could endure. We may see a certain restless and fiery element in the Stephen soul which threatens prematurely to impair the robust body and the vigorous intellect. Mr. Stephen once explained to a brother-in-law how, instead of allowing his mind a fallow, he was practising a rotation of crops and bestowing upon certain learned and polished essays those powers of mind that were fatigued by Colonial despatches. But human nature resents such intensive culture. He was alarmingly ill in 1847, and, after taking sick leave, he in the next year resigned his office at the age of fifty-nine. The loss of his eldest son in 1846 had deeply affected him. He was made a Privy Councillor and knighted. His health improved, and once more he looked about for work. In 1849 he pub-

[1] Taylor: 'Autobiography,' vol. i. p. 233.
[2] 'Greville Memoirs' (1888), vol. iv. p. 180.

lished in a collected form the 'Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography,' which during the past eleven years he had contributed to the *Edinburgh Review*, and which had earned for him a deserved celebrity in the literary world. In the same year the Regius professorship of modern history at Cambridge fell vacant. Macaulay would not accept it for himself, but, after he had been consulted by the Prince Consort, his friend Stephen was appointed.[1] Not without regret I may record that he had at one time hoped for the Downing professorship of the laws of England. An admirable professor of law or of history Sir James Stephen would have made, had the university of those days required of its professors any but the most thankless and unprofitable exercises. As it was, his published lectures on the history of France, though they were commended by good judges, show, so it seems to me, some signs of the discouraging atmosphere in which they were delivered, and some loss of that masterly vigour which has painted for all time the portraits of the Clapham sect. And, indeed, another serious illness, threatening brain fever, came in 1850. In 1859 he went abroad for his health, and he died at Coblentz.

One of the anecdotes which Sir Henry Taylor told of his friend and colleague was repeated by Leslie, and will bear repeating once more. 'Surely,' said Taylor upon some occasion, 'the simple thing to do was so and so.' Stephen answered doubtfully, adding, 'The truth is that I am not a simple man.' 'No,' said Taylor, 'you are the most composite man that I have met with in all my experience of human nature.'[2] We should be incurring a needless danger were we to endeavour to reproduce upon a smaller scale the portrait of the father which the son found it no easy task to draw. Evidently some skill in portraiture, as well as direct observation, was necessary in order to present an harmonious whole instead of a mosaic of scarcely compatible attributes. In one of his essays Sir James used a simile, which naturally recurs to the minds of those who are thinking of its author. He said that a writer whose books he was reviewing was 'a sensitive

[1] Trevelyan: 'Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay' (1881), p. 528.
[2] Taylor: 'Autobiography,' vol. ii. p. 303.

plant grafted on a Norwegian pine.'[1] In Sir James's own case some would see more of the Norwegian pine and others more of the sensitive plant. From some papers of Leslie's written late in life I will take a few words which seem characteristic of the 'composite' father and of his two sons. They concern certain busts of Sir James : the one by Marochetti, the other by Munro. The Marochetti bust passed to the elder son and has been presented to the National Portrait Gallery. 'Fitzjames thought his own much the best.' He considered it, so Leslie had been told, 'his most valuable possession.' '[My sister] and I agreed in thinking it a coarse caricature and preferred the Munro, which, though not a great work of art, is, I think, a really good likeness. . . . I may add that Fitzjames's preference for the Marochetti was to my mind characteristic. It made Sir James look like the statesman dictating a despatch to suppress a rebellion, but took all the delicacy out of his face. Fitzjames revered our father even more than I did, but could not help thinking that his sensitiveness was a weakness to be regretted.' Two sculptors, or, again, two sons, might form different ideas of the 'composite' man : the prompt, firm, and courageous administrator, austere to himself, austere to his subordinates, 'a living categorical imperative,' as Leslie said of him, strong-willed and tenacious, and yet withal the most sensitive of men, shrinking from praise as others shrink from blame, and shy with an exceeding shyness, such as, to quote another of Taylor's phrases, was not to be imagined 'in any one whose soul had not been pre-existent in a wild duck.'[2] Some of the shyness wore off in course of time ; but Leslie remembered being warned by his mother that his father had been born 'without a skin,' and in his last years Leslie would sometimes speak of himself as 'skinless.' That image of a sensitive plant grafted on a Norwegian pine will, so I think, come back to us in the course of our tale, and so also will the wild duck.

'I should have liked but too well to be a real and true man

[1] 'Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography' (1849), vol. ii. p. 388. The phrase was applied to Isaac Taylor, the author of 'The Natural History of Enthusiasm.' [2] Taylor : 'Autobiography,' vol. ii. p. 304.

of letters.' These words are copied from a journal which James Stephen kept for some months in 1846. Had it but covered a longer space of time, it would have become a deeply interesting book, for the writer saw most of the people who were best worth seeing, read many of the books that were best worth reading, and with him to jot down a remark on man or book was to turn a sentence sufficiently pointed to be good reading. Just one example I will take, premising that at the moment the 'bird-of-passage' at the Colonial Office was W. E. Gladstone, of whom Mr. Stephen had formed but a poor opinion. '15 Jan.—I have read (how quick I read!) nearly one-third of the first volume of Carlyle's odd book about Cromwell. A good book, because it has all his genuine letters and speeches, and all the facts now to be ascertained about his personal history. But that poor jargon, that conjuring with words, is a flimsy business, the instrument of all bitterness, scorn, and self-worship in disguise, and a mere veil to hide from Carlyle himself the essential poverty of his thoughts. Phrase-making is not thought-finding, whatever old Carlyle or young England or middle-aged Eton (W. E. G. to wit) may suppose to the contrary.' But 'middle-aged Eton' thrown out at so much of W. E. G. as had revealed itself in 1846, shows us that the Under-Secretary himself had some power of making phrases as well as of finding thoughts. Leslie said that his father, 'had he devoted his talents to literature, would have gained a far higher place than had been reached by any of his family.' This is a published judgment, and it may not be amiss to add some unpublished words taken from a letter in which Leslie thanked his friend Mr. Morley for a copy of his book on Rousseau. 'You have, I think, succeeded admirably. . . . Will it please you or not if I say that you often remind me (though I can't quite put my finger on the points of resemblance) of my father's essays? I, at any rate, mean to be complimentary, and I am inclined to think that you will take it in that sense.' Those who know their 'Clapham Sect' will suppose that the recipient of this letter was not offended by the comparison. Lord Brougham showed a wonderful obtusity when he ascribed one of James Stephen's

essays to the hated Macaulay, and the plea that he had given it but a hasty glance will not absolve him.[1] If Stephen's friend 'Tom' had a style of his own, so also had Stephen.

The wish that he had been 'a real and true man of letters' came to him somewhat late in life. So we may gather from a letter which he wrote to his brother-in-law, the Rev. John Venn, and a portion of which may here be given since it illustrates at more than one point the opinions and accomplishments of Leslie's father.

BRIGHTON,
August 25, 1838.

MY DEAR JOHN,—Your letter on the subject of the *Edinburgh Review* reached me in London, but it was impossible for me to answer it there where I could neither find the requisite leisure nor a fit amanuensis. Reviewing is an employment which I have never held in great esteem. It is generally a self-sufficient, insolent, superficial, and unedifying style of writing, and I had fully persuaded myself that I should never be enlisted in the Craft. But I am not the first example of self-ignorance and of the frailty of human resolution. I was seduced into the service by my zeal to render homage to Mr. Wilberforce, and then finding to my great surprise that I had the gift of writing in such a manner as to interest my readers, I made the second attempt. My purpose was at first to expatiate upon Newman catholicism, but finding that Dr. Arnold[2] had anticipated me in the *Edinburgh* respecting the system generally, I took up Whitfield's life as a sort of preface to the comparatively narrow survey of poor [Richard] Froude's absurdities. I had promised the Editor a third paper upon a much more difficult subject, which was to have appeared in January next; but on reflection I found that it would involve me in politics, from which the duties of my station, or rather its proprieties, command me to abstain, and I have therefore no project of any kind on my hands at present. Yet I have quite enough upon them, with Canadian disturbances and

[1] 'Correspondence of Macvey Napier,' pp. 403–4.
[2] Dr. Arnold had gone forth to crush 'the Oxford Malignants.'

West Indian emancipation, convict discipline, Australian emigration, and Cape of Good Hope warfare. Yet these perplexities are in great part the inducements to try my hand at this kind of fugitive literature, as a change of crop is often as great a relief to the soil as a fallow.

You will readily understand that much management is necessary to ensure the introduction into the *Edinburgh Review* of anything which has a religious aspect. It must be rendered entertaining, or at least interesting, to those who are not particularly religious people, and it is necessary to carry liberal colours as far as they can be made to harmonise with Christian feelings. My own firm conviction is that the *Edinburgh* reviewers as a body are not the profane people usually supposed by their antagonists, but that, on the contrary, they are really very glad that the work should have a more religious stamp given to it, and that their difficulty hitherto has been to find an associate who would employ language acceptable at once to the devout and to the readers for amusement and to the professors of Whiggery. It would be affectation to pretend that this qualification does not belong to myself in a higher degree than to any other of their ordinary contributors, and as I have neither time nor learning for attempting anything of a more enduring or worthy character, I shall very likely go on writing reviews if no unforeseen impediments should arise. . . .

It seems desirable to insist for one moment upon the highly literate, and even literary, character of the home in which Leslie spent his youth, for in this respect it differed markedly from the homes of some of those who shared Sir James Stephen's evangelical opinions. He was a deeply religious man and a very serious man, but a man of wide sympathies, acute understanding, and high culture. In the months in which, by aid of his fragmentary journal, I can see him most plainly, he is bestowing the evenings of his laborious days upon Voltaire, among other edifying historians, and is duly laudatory. He even appreciates to the full the wit of a French play that he took up at the Athenæum, while

condemning the matter thereof as indescribably nasty. And then he knew nearly every one who was any one in the world of good letters and good talk, and he could hold his own, and more than his own, with the best of talkers. '1846. May 16. I went to breakfast,' he says, 'with Tom Macaulay—[Macaulay is always 'Tom']—and met Hallam and Milman and Bps. Samuel Wilberforce and Thirlwall and Lord Glenelg and Empson and Robert Wilberforce and Monckton Milnes and Charles Buller.' The conversation at the breakfast-table was, in Mr. Stephen's judgment, more frivolous than beseemed the age and profession of some of the talkers, but its brilliance was enjoyed while it lasted. As to his own 'loquacity,' for which in his journal he takes himself to task, many stories have been told, some of which Leslie has repeated. He was not talkative, and would often sit silent in the company of other men ; but when once he had started, he had much to say of all things human and divine. One additional testimony to the excellence of the matter and manner of those floods of speech has lately been published. In May 1846 Frederick Rogers, afterwards Lord Blachford, recently introduced into the Colonial Office as Stephen's immediate subordinate, wrote thus : 'Hitherto I like Stephen. He is the most consecutive, or rather continuous, talker I ever heard flow, with a great deal in what he says, and singular precision of thought and expression and a spice of humour running through the whole.'[1]

This looks like a just estimate. I have been told that in the Stephen household any laxity in speech, any misuse of words brought correction from a father whose 'singular precision of thought and expression' had been cultivated by a marvellously rapid dictation of complicated Acts of Parliament, as well as by an admiring study of French literature. As to the 'spice of humour,' this by itself was sufficient to distinguish the historian of the 'Evangelical Succession' from the ordinary hagiographer. Those evangelical saints of his are saints indeed, but they are very human, and it may fall out that the spice with which he embalmed them will preserve their lineaments when the holy men of a newer dispensation

[1] 'Letters of Lord Blachford,' p. 231, May 28, 1846.

are the merest of skeletons. The width of his sympathy and his alertness to what was happening in the great world may be illustrated by a letter that he wrote in 1845 to the editor of the *Edinburgh Review* upon the publication of Mill's 'Logic.' He sees at once that this is 'one of the most important productions of this nineteenth century,' and, whatever we now may think of Mill's work, that was unquestionably a sound, though it was a rapid, judgment. He sees also at a glance the real significance of Mill's theories. Mill has been reticent and timid, but the book attacks the base of James Stephen's 'most cherished convictions.' Nevertheless, he has 'a great personal liking' for its author, and is bestirring himself in order that it may fall into the hands of a competent reviewer.[1]

To what Leslie said of his father's religion, it would not be wise for a stranger to make additions. 'He began life as a strong evangelical, and never avowedly changed; but his experience of the world, his sympathy with other forms of belief, and his interest in the great churchmen of the Middle Ages, led to his holding the inherited doctrine in a latitudinarian sense.'[2] This 'composite' man seems to have held a somewhat composite creed, and if he wore the evangelical bearings, wore them with a difference that was all his own. As an illustration of his good temper, Aubrey de Vere told how he had taken no offence at being called 'a transcendental Quaker with a tendency to popery.'[3] His aberrations from the traditional creed were sufficient to cause some outcry when he was appointed to the Cambridge professorship. The university was in an irritable condition, resenting a threatened commission, and 'the first minister of the Crown' chose this moment 'to send down to the university an old and tried servant of the Government' who had his doubts about eternal punishment. Clearly the Church was in danger.[4] When Leslie was an undergraduate, 'at a congregation held on October 29 [1851],

[1] 'Correspondence of Macvey Napier,' p. 496.
[2] 'Dict. Nat. Biog.,' vol. liv., p. 164.
[3] 'Correspondence of Henry Taylor,' p. 376.
[4] See a tract entitled 'The Government Scheme of Education in the University of Cambridge': London, 1850 [Brit. Mus. 8365, e. 2].

the Reverend Lucius Arthur, M.A., of Trinity College, offered a Grace in the following terms: Cum falsa doctrina in religione omnino cavenda sit: Placeat vobis ut fiat inquisitio in opiniones a professore historiae recentioris vulgatas.' Let the record stand as we find it in the pages of Cooper's 'Annals.'[1] We are sometimes glad of a proof that, after all, the world does move. It was an edifying spectacle for the undergraduate at Trinity Hall. However, the proposed 'grace' was not put to the Senate.[2] Cambridge was no place for 'movements,' as Leslie was learning. 'Our prevailing tone,' as he wrote some years afterwards, 'is what I should venture to describe as quiet good sense, and what fanatics would consider to be only fit for careless Gallios.'[3] But it may be noticed in passing that the opinion which Mr. Arthur would have had condemned by the Cambridge Senate was apparently much the same as that which was soon to induce another of Leslie's teachers, Dr. Jelf, to eject yet a third of his teachers, Mr. Maurice, from a professorship in London. What, however, is best worth knowing of Sir James Stephen's religion is no scheme of doctrine but the spirit which is revealed by the following words, which I shall venture, though after some hesitation, to take from his journal. 'Well, I have never yet passed a day without praying for the spiritual weal of my children, since I had any to pray for, and if we err on the side of not pressing them to religious demonstrations, developments or early sensibility, may God forgive us, and compensate the loss to them! My daily and nightly terror is that they should be "patent Christians" — formalists, praters, cheats, without meaning or even knowing it.' One part at least of this earnest desire was amply fulfilled. Leslie grew up to be no 'patent Christian' (the phrase, I think, is Sydney Smith's,) no formalist, no prater, and no cheat, and the more I have heard and read of his father, the more deeply I have been convinced that cheat, prater, formalist, or 'patent

[1] Cooper: 'Annals of Cambridge,' vol. v. p. 33.
[2] A Council known as the 'Caput' quashed it.
[3] 'Sketches from Cambridge,' pp. 136–7.

Christian,' Leslie could not have been without ceasing to be his father's son.

His mother long outlived his father and died in 1875 in her eighty-second year, when he had left Cambridge and was a married man in London, making his way as a journalist. Instead of repeating the affectionate sentences which he devoted to her memory in the Life of his brother,[1] I will give a few extracts from letters written by him to friends of his near the end of Lady Stephen's life. That my readers should form some image of her is desirable, for it will be chiefly by the aid of her diary that I shall be able to tell them a little of Leslie's boyhood.

January 8, 1874.

My dear Morley, . . . Thank you heartily for what you said upon that other sad subject. As you speak to me I will tell you the truth. I can hardly feel so sad as I sometimes fancy that I ought to feel; and yet I doubt again whether it is right to be very sad. My mother, as I often think, had the healthiest nature that I ever knew. My brother inherited from her all his strength; but in her the strength was absolutely free from harshness. The gradual decay of such a nature has in it so much that is beautiful that, in the old theological [language],[2] the grief becomes sanctified. It seems to be a softening rather than a decay. She gradually becomes dreamy, and whenever she wakes up it is always to say something kindly and cheerful. I have not heard from her a single word of repining at anything, and what is equally characteristic of her, not a word of set resignation. She is as simple and unaffected now as I ever saw her, and nobody could be less affected at any time.

How can one grieve very bitterly at a noble life going out like a solemn piece of music? The harmony is so perfect that grief seems to be a kind of discord. It is indeed inexpressibly solemn and touching, and, if I am good for anything, I shall remember all these days to the end of my life. I could, if I tried, conjure up regrets for past shortcomings of my own, but that would be against my

[1] 'Life of Sir J. F. Stephen,' p. 39. [2] A word missing.

creed ; and to say the truth, I cannot accuse myself of having been a bad son. Rather, I shall always be proud to think how she loved me, and only anxious to act in her spirit and to do what she would have thought right.

Ah ! I could go on talking about her, and trying to make you see through my eyes—but I have said enough. . . .

Yours ever most warmly,

L. S.

January 2, 1874.

My dear Holmes, . . . And now, I have one other piece of family news, and alas ! a very sad one to me and to us all. My mother is failing . . . I can't well talk about it or even write about it. You can imagine what it is to see the fading out of the healthiest and happiest nature I have ever known, and the one whom I have had most reason to love all my life. You may think what she was like when I say that my brother inherited all his strength and healthiness from her ; but that in her it was combined with a womanly tenderness always sweet and affectionate. I have never seen such a combination of sound mental and bodily health with so much gentleness and affection. . . .

March 9, 1875.

My dear Morley,—Thank you heartily for your kind letter. To lose a mother is a blow at any time, and my mother was all that I can fancy in an old woman—that those words, by the way, should have an offensive sound and not be kept to express the highest degree of respect and affection is a singular proof of the brutality of the world. My life will be so much the poorer henceforth. I have one person less to believe in me and one person less to reverence. . . .

After these words any of mine would be idle ; but enough, so I think, has been said to suggest that the sons of Sir James and Lady Stephen were not unlikely to inherit at birth or to acquire in childhood some qualities which would make them memorable. Also, though Lady Stephen was as affectionate

a mother as child or man could wish to have, I believe that what she wrote of her children may be accepted without the discount usual in such cases. Every entry in her diary that I have seen is as wise as it is tender, and in the first ten years of Leslie's life she set down many phrases which were to the end of his days just those which a close and impartial observer would have wished to use. Her children would not be geese ; but had they been geese she would not have thought them swans.[1]

[1] A selection from Sir James Stephen's letters, edited with biographical notes by his daughter, Miss C. E. Stephen, has lately been printed. It is not published, but copies can be obtained from the printer, Mr. John Bellows, of Gloucester.

III

BOYHOOD

(1832–1850)

Leslie Stephen was born on November 28, 1832. If in future histories of literature there is to be a Victorian Age, he may well be said to have 'flourished' in it, for at both ends his life overlapped the Queen's reign by a few years. The earliest public event that he could remember was her accession, for he was put into mourning for William IV. He was knighted on the coronation of Edward VII., when, though still working courageously, he had, I fear, ceased to 'flourish.' For the moment, however, it is more important for us to remember the place that he occupied in the family circle. When he was born, his eldest brother, Herbert, was already ten years old, and his second brother was three and a half. This last interval should be had in mind. At Cambridge Fitzjames and Leslie were not contemporaries; the one was on the point of 'going down' when the other was 'coming up' as a freshman. When he was two years old a sister was born. 'As to the circumstances of my early life,' he said to his children, 'you will find a sufficient indication of their general character in the Life of my brother, Sir J. F. Stephen. It gives the best picture that I could draw of the household in which I spent my days till I went to college. I will only add that, living as I did at home, where my sister and I were close companions, we two formed an especially warm intimacy, which has lasted till now. . . . She has been more like a twin than a younger sister.'

His father's house was in Kensington Gore—now 42 Hyde Park Gate—only a few yards from the house where he himself

was long to live and was to die. Indeed, during the greater part of his life his home was in the parts of Kensington. His last walks were taken in the Gardens, where as a child he had bowled his hoop. He had spent many hours fishing in the Serpentine, and the Round Pond had been for him the haunt of the caddis worm. But every year he saw something of the seaside or the country, and he soon began to lay the foundations of his intimate knowledge of Southern England, its highways and byways.

His doings were from the first minutely chronicled, and his sayings so soon as they became articulate. For the sake of a President of the Alpine Club we may remark that already in 1834 'he is a most independent-spirited little fellow, very bold and very persevering. He climbs up chairs and sofas and seems to have no fear at all when he is trying to do anything. He will persevere for a very long time and seem to be quite delighted when he succeeds. He is rather violent in his temper, and, if displeased, will cry most loudly.' As we watch his developing character, we may notice in the first place that side of it which gives his mother some anxiety. '(1834.) He is very impetuous indeed.' . . . 'He is very turbulent and self-willed and rather passionate, but in a moment changes to kindness and affection.' . . . 'He is, if possible, even more sensitive than his brothers. A word or even a look of blame puts him into an agony of distress.' 'A hasty word will make him burst into fits of crying.' '(1835.) Leslie is of all the children I ever saw the most sensible of a balk. He cannot bear a word or a look of reproof.' . . . 'He is abashed at a look and seems to have scarcely courage to ask for what he wants.' '(1835.) I had attempted to begin a little lesson with him, but as yet can make nothing of him. A sort of nervous feeling seems to come upon him and really to prevent him from doing what I tell him.' 'It seems as if every kind of encouragement was good for him, and every notice that is taken of him seems to draw him out and do him good.' '(1836.) He said something yesterday after dinner of which we took notice. Instantly he was under the table and said, "I will go upstairs, I will go in my nursery," as if he could not bear to be looked

at.' 'When he is naughty it seems more like nervous irritability than real naughtiness.' 'He is endeavouring to conquer his shyness, and I have seen him more than once make an effort to hold out his hand and to speak to people.' '(1837.) He is the most sensitive child I ever saw. He cannot endure to hear of any suffering or sorrow or any naughtiness. In telling a story he cannot endure to hear of the boys being naughty or even the animals in a make-believe story. He always begs me to make them good instead. I was reading to him to-day in the history of our Saviour about his being betrayed, and, though I carefully left out what was likely to affect him most, he could not bear it. His face grew pale, and at last he pressed his hands to his head with a look of the greatest distress and suffering. I stopped and told him I would not read it, which seemed a great relief to him.' 'Amongst the Scripture pictures there are some that he never seems tired of admiring; but he will not even look at the Crucifixion or any subject of that kind, but turns it over and says, "Oh! that is shocking."' A 'happy ending' for the 'Erl King' had to be invented for the benefit of Leslie and his sister.

But if Mrs. Stephen saw something of the 'wild-duck' temperament in her youngest son, she saw also that he was a fascinating and engaging child, whose fits of 'nervous naughtiness' soon pass away, 'and then he is all at once humble and gentle and sorrowful.' 'The feeling of being loved seems to give him peculiar pleasure.' It is beautiful to see him with his sister. He has a remarkable love for lovely things, especially for views of Switzerland. He has a passion for flowers. He is always drawing. Indeed, a reader of this chronicle would be inclined to guess that if Leslie is going to be famous, it will be, not as man of letters, but as artist. He is a quiet boy, capable of amusing himself: much given to building elaborate structures with his bricks and to long conversations with the beasts of Noah's Ark, for Noah's Ark (it is ominously written) 'is a favourite amusement.' The real beasts at the Zoological were, as they were to be for many long years, his very good friends. To get him to play with a strange boy was difficult; but, the

ice having once been broken, the pleasures of sociability were admitted and a boisterous romp was the result. Unfortunately, so we may think, there was often no boy for him to romp with, for his brothers were at school.

Intellectually he was no prodigy. He was bright and quick and imitative, and his brothers called him 'the mocking-bird.' He was 'years in advance' of them in learning how to wind and spin a top without any lessons in the art. Arithmetic came easy to him; but he was backward in reading. Soon after he is six years old he is 'at last reading by himself, and has got through twenty-two pages of Jack the Giant-killer.' 'He is very soon wearied with application to a book. Before he has been ten minutes engaged he begins to yawn and look pale.' This 'languor of body' was to be the trouble for many years to come. 'When fatigued he is hardly able to tell what two and two make.' After one short struggle, he had submitted with much docility to Watts's 'Catechism,' but had a curious way of insisting on giving answers in his own words before he would give those that had been cut and dried.

His first appearance in church (September 16, 1838) was not wholly uneventful. The sermon, Mrs. Stephen says, was very long and rather trying to the children. 'Toward the end of it, Leslie, quite forgetting himself, said in a loud voice "Three." He was counting my rings. The people in the next pew turned round and stared, and poor Lelly dropped his face in great confusion on my lap. Soon afterwards a loud yawn was heard from him. With these exceptions he was very good.' His first appearance (1839) as a literary critic is perhaps more characteristic. 'Leslie seems to have a great deal of steadiness. I was reading to them lately for their after-dinner book the "Sketch-book of a Young Naturalist," a very amusing little book, telling entertaining anecdotes of animals, insects, &c., but without any particular order. Leslie was rather amused with the stories at first, but when I had finished it, he told me he wished I would not read that kind of book that went *wiggling* from one subject to another; he liked a book that was mores teady and settled, like that long thing (the "Library of Entertaining Knowledge"); he liked to have a great deal on one

subject and in regular order.' Subsequent experience did not make him fonder of books that 'wiggle.'

Of what he looked like I find nothing recorded, save that Mr. Guy Gisborne had compared him to 'a beautiful chestnut racer with his hair decorated by a careful groom.' In one respect the simile hit the mark. The young thoroughbred, with the chestnut mane, carried no unnecessary ounce of flesh. Here, indeed, was a just cause for a little alarm. The fragile boy tended to become mere length without breadth. In 1839 he had begun both Latin and French with his mother as teacher. 'He seems to like Latin the best of his lessons, partly, I think, because he thinks it the most boyish.' French, too, he picks up readily, though he wonders that the French can talk their language without knowing the English of it. Indeed, he was industrious and persevering. But it was impossible to keep him long at lessons; he soon grew pale and weary.

Another trait was becoming apparent: a trait that was pleasant enough to observe at first, but which gave occasion for some maternal uneasiness as it became more marked. Leslie was keenly susceptible to the charm of poetry, and his mother had encouraged the taste. She had a great store of verse in her memory, and Leslie loved to listen. At the age of five, 'Thalaba' was his favourite. 'I like to hear you when you read "Thalaba"—Are you going to read "Thalaba?"—Why don't you read "Thalaba"?' A little later (1839), 'he takes great pleasure in many of Wordsworth's little poems and gets me to read them to him.' Wordsworth we might think would be soothing; Leslie found him so in some bad days that were coming. Scott was another affair. Scott went to the boy's head like wine. '(1840.) Leslie is taking great delight in the "Lady of the Lake," chiefly in the stag chase. [He and his sister] both drive out with me now every day, and Leslie's great delight, as soon as we get out, is to repeat the "Lady of the Lake." He is generally kneeling on the front seat, or sitting on the box by the coachman. He seems to forget everything else and to be entirely absorbed in what he is saying, often repeating it so loud that the passengers turn round in astonishment. He hardly hears if he is spoken to and seems to observe nothing

that is going on.' 'This evening Leslie entertained us all with his repetition of "Marmion." He went into the conservatory, stretched himself along the bench and repeated the whole battle in so loud and animated and varied a tone that it was impossible not to listen to him. When he had finished, his face was red with exertion.' On another day when they were out driving, his brother Herbert was reading 'Marmion.' 'Leslie seemed to drink in every word. Every muscle of his face was in motion. Sometimes he was repeating to himself after Herbert, and could hardly refrain himself from breaking out aloud. He shook his head and smiled and sometimes shut his eyes as if nothing should interrupt him in the exquisite enjoyment. . . . I never saw such an expression of delight on any countenance.' 'He seems to have neither eyes nor ears for anything that is passing round him, but to be completely absorbed by what he is saying.'

The boy, too, was developing a conscience that was not quite like other people's consciences and was somewhat troublesome to other people. His parents wanted him to ride to church on the donkey. But he was 'greatly distressed at the idea, and said that he thought it wrong to make the donkey work on Sunday.' Even his father's arguments would not convince this little Sabbatarian. He would not read his prayers; 'he could not feel that he was praying to God if he read them; nor would he say them if any one else was in the room, or stay in the room while his brother said his.' And then he would lie long awake, 'playing the band,' as he called it: that is, making a humming noise, which meant that he was still repeating poetry.

At this moment a doctor was consulted. Long afterwards, Leslie, having to tell this part of the story, told it thus: 'In 1840 my mother observed certain peculiarities in me which she took at first to be indications of precocious genius. After a time, however, she consulted an eminent physician, who informed her that they were really signs of a disordered circulation. He added that I was in a fair way to become feeble in mind and deformed in body, and strongly advised that I should be sent to school, where my brain would be in

less danger of injudicious stimulation. He added that even my life was at stake.'[1] With his mother's record before me, I can say that the facts thus reported are true enough, though, as we shall expect if we know the reporter, his humour has played around them. The doctor took note of 'his character, his enthusiastic love of poetry, his intelligence, his sensitiveness and conscientiousness, his delicacy and refinement of taste,' but was not altogether satisfied. School, fresh air, 'humdrum lessons,' and a rigorous abstinence from poetry were prescribed. Living at home and associating with grown-up people were pronounced to be as bad for the boy's mind 'as feeding upon turtle and venison and drinking champagne would be for his body.'

Whether the physician, as has been surmised, crushed a poet to make a critic, I cannot say; but I fancy that if now he could review that lad's career—the seventy years of life, the forty years of hard literary work, and the sunset from Mont Blanc—he would congratulate himself upon his scientific sagacity, even if he deprived the world of one brief outburst of song. None the less, it is pathetic to read how Leslie 'could with difficulty keep from crying' when he learnt that he was to be deprived of his poetry, and Mrs. Stephen confesses that she administered one small dose of this deadly drug ('a little bit of the "Lay of the Last Minstrel"') in the course of the long drive to Brighton. At Brighton Fitzjames had then been at school for some years in the house of Mr. Guest in Sussex Square. Promptly acting on the doctor's advice, Mr. Stephen broke up his home in London, and Mrs. Stephen, with her two youngest children, settled a few doors off from Mr. Guest's in order that Leslie might attend the school during the day-time but sleep at home. On October 19, 1840, he became a schoolboy.

Dr. Brighton worked wonders. After a little more than a year of his treatment the London physician was well satisfied. Leslie's appearance, he said, was completely altered; he was making healthy flesh and blood. I am bound to say, however, that the stay at Brighton was not untroubled. Leslie's temper

[1] 'Life of Sir J. F. Stephen,' p. 74.

had been violent at times, though he made gallant efforts to control it. Apparently a brain fever was not far off. I must add, to prevent mistake, that he was not a spoilt child. When he was naughty he was punished by having to dine in solitude, which he very much disliked, and he was read to in the evenings only if there had been no 'temper' during the day. And, lastly, I may remark that from this time onwards his behaviour steadily improves in the minutely faithful pages from which I have been copying. 'Leslie has been very good' becomes a common entry. Along with the 'healthy flesh and blood' habits of reserve and self-control were being formed. He feels deeply and acutely, but will not let others observe his feelings. He enjoys the playground and is happy with other boys. As to the 'humdrum lessons,' they went well. Mr. Guest said that he had never taught so quick a boy. At home he was often drawing, and I read also of singing lessons, which, however, were thrown away. Poetry was tabooed; but the 'Arabian Nights' were enjoyed, and Washington Irving's 'Columbus' was 'devoured with great eagerness.' Leslie had discovered that prose would do if verse could not be had, and had taken to Captain Grey's expeditions in South Australia 'exactly as he did to "Marmion."'

At the end of 1841 the father decided to send both the boys to Eton. The physician opined that Leslie might go there safely, and, indeed, advised that they should be sent into a master's house; they would become more boyish, and have 'the sugar taken out of them.' However, about this matter Mr. Stephen had his own opinion, and it was not favourable to the masters' houses. Dr. Hawtrey—head-masters are not omniscient—assured him that there was not the slightest prejudice at Eton against boys living at home and going to school for the day. So the two young Stephens were to live 'up town.' In Windsor their parents made a home for some five years. Heroically, for his sons' sake, the hard-worked father bore the daily journey to and from Downing Street. A picturesque phrase of his tells of 'the downright dinginess and dirt and quiet of Windsor, cowering beneath that great bully,

the Castle, as a cur in the paws of a bulldog.' The two sons entered Eton on April 15, 1842 ; Stephen major, aged thirteen, was placed in the 'Remove' ; Stephen minor, aged nine and a half, was placed in 'Upper Greek' ; their tutor was Mr. Balston ; a room where they might breakfast and keep their books was found for them in the house of Mrs. Dodd, a 'dame.'

When half a century afterwards Stephen minor wrote the Life of 'his major,' he told of the rough treatment to which, as an 'up town boy,' that sturdy and vigorous youth had been subjected. For his own part, so he gave his readers to understand, he had little to complain of. One case in which he was being bullied he would record because it was honourable to Fitzjames. He had been reminded of it by his mother's journal, and I will give her words. ('October 22, 1842.) One day this week F. went to his room at Dodd's and found the door locked. When it was opened, he found there a great boy who had been 'licking' Leslie, as they called it. Leslie was crying in the corner of the room. F. immediately began to lick the great boy and, according to his own account, did it so thoroughly that there is no fear of his attacking Leslie again.' For the rest, said Leslie in 1895, 'my personal recollections do not reveal any particular tyranny. Such bullying as I had to endure was very occasional, and has left no impression upon my memory. . . . The truth is that the difference between me and my brother was the difference between the willow and the oak, and that I evaded such assaults as he met with open defiance.'[1] I can add that in his mother's journal I have seen no signs that Leslie was roughly handled. But he was not the boy to go home and tell of his woes, nor was he the man to keep them long in memory. Still, I cannot but think that the following passage, written by 'An Outsider,' in 1873, is coloured by personal experience. The occasion upon which it was written was a case of bullying at Winchester which had set many people talking ; and about the necessity of hardening boys by the use of sticks some of them had talked in a manner which made this 'Outsider's'

[1] 'Life of Sir J. F. Stephen,' p. 78.

heart hot within him. 'Let him [our hypothetical boy] be what many hale and vigorous men have been in their childhood, a pale delicate boy, with thin limbs and spider fingers and a sensitive organisation. . . . Is there a more piteous object in the world, excluding cases of absolute physical maltreatment, than such a little wretch, set down by himself amidst some hundreds of lads as mischievous and thoughtless as monkeys? . . . There used at a certain period—not so far removed as to be beyond the memory of persons still living and indeed still writing—to be a good many pariahs such as I have described ; poor little fragments of humanity, kicked contemptuously aside, when not actively bullied, and heartily ashamed of themselves for their undeniable atrocity. With what deep envy they regarded their robuster companions, and what a surprising revelation it was when they discovered at the university that a youth might be tolerated and even popular, without physical prowess, is still engrained pretty deeply in some memories. A public school in those old days might be a paradise to the Tom Browns, but it was a purgatory to the luckless lads marked out for brutality by the thinness of their skins. To them the sufferings of poor old Dobbin in 'Vanity Fair' recall realities a good deal more forcibly than the triumphs of the pugnacious Brown.'[1] There is a parallel passage in an essay on Horace Walpole which speaks of 'the sufferings of a delicate lad at a public school in the old (and not so very old) brutal days. The victim of that tyranny shrank away from the horseplay of his companions to muse, like Dobbin, over the 'Arabian Nights' in a corner, or find some amusement which his tormentors held to be only fit for girls.'[2] It may be a casual coincidence ; but Leslie was reading the 'Arabian Nignts' when he first went to Eton.

[1] *Cornhill Magazine*, 1873, p. 281.

[2] 'Hours in a Library,' ed. 1892, vol. ii. p. 352. A third passage of a similar kind will be found in the (New York) *Nation* for November 15, 1872. Pleasanter, but less vivid, memories of Eton are suggested in an Introduction (p. xiii) prefixed to James Payn's 'Backwater of Life' (1899). Stephen himself has remarked that 'many men resemble Thackeray in dwelling more fondly upon their schooldays in proportion to the remoteness of the memory.' *See* 'Essay on Thackeray,' p. 311.

It is not impossible that into the contempt for the boy who lived 'up town' there entered in some cases not a little envy. Up town there was a sister with whom Stephen minor had long rides in the Great Park. Up town there was a pony and there was a terrier; there were rabbits and pigeons and a dearly beloved dormouse. Up town he could go on with his drawing while the 'Arabian Nights' were read aloud. The natural boy resents an unfair attempt to make the best of both worlds. Also he detects an implied condemnation of the manners and customs of the school. And in this he is sometimes right. I gather that in 1846, when Fitzjames had left Eton, Leslie was occasionally inclined to see the worst of his two worlds. There was no other boy at home, and he had no fair chance of making friends at school. 'He craves for more society,' writes his father in his journal. 'How can I give it him? Send him out and out to Eton?' 'Not if that can be avoided,' is the answer, after some remarks about the morals of the place as well as about Leslie's delicate health. 'Poor boy! I fear he must submit to the evil of dulness for the present.' The wisdom of this decision is not incontrovertible. Leslie's 'craving for society'—or rather for friendship—remained unsatisfied until he went to college, and the evil of dulness is a real evil to a boy who, though shy, is by nature merry and high-spirited.

He was not yet robust. Not only do I read of a good deal of 'staying out' in the Etonian sense, but there was some reason to fear that he would be permanently lame. An eminent surgeon was consulted, and the whole of one 'half' was spent at Brighton. In 1846 Mr. Stephen remarks that Fitzjames has walked thirty-three miles at a stretch and looks all the better for it. 'Whence this strange disparity of strength between my sons?' Leslie had become a fearless, if not an expert, rider of ponies, but a long walk was too much for him. And there were times when imaginative literature was too much for him. '(1845.) Herbert has been reading to us in the evenings "The Last Days of Pompeii." Leslie became extremely excited about it, and just at the end, about Arbaces, I was really alarmed at the manner in which he felt it; the

colour rose in his cheeks ; he was trembling and almost crying.' Still he was making some life-long friends : 'Ivanhoe,' for instance, and Lamb's 'Tales.' Characteristically his father will not sit in judgment on Tom Macaulay's 'Lays,' but thinks that they must be meritorious because a little boy of his acquaintance 'recites them with the utmost possible glee.'[1] Characteristically in later days Leslie, reviewing Lytton's work as a novelist, refused to speak of 'The Last Days,' because it was sanctified by schoolday associations. 'Glaucus exposed to the lions stands in our memory beside Charles O'Malley in his Peninsular adventures, and Ivanhoe in the castle of Front de Bœuf, and Robinson Crusoe discovering the footprints in the sand. We can no more reason about the merits of the story than we can seriously entertain the question whether the captain of the boats in those days was the biggest, strongest, and most active of men since the days of Achilles.'[2]

As to his lessons, when he could work at all, Leslie was diligent. '(1842.) He will do the utmost that is required of him. If there is any doubt about the lesson, he will do the outside, and says, "Never mind, it will do me no harm to do a little too much."' Until it was necessary that he should be 'excused early school' he would be up at six and off to Eton by lamp-light, having first read the Bible by his mother's side. She was teaching him shorthand, an hereditary accomplishment in the Venn family. He was learning French and drawing, though singing he had already pronounced to be 'humbug.' Altogether, when it is considered that he was doing at home what most Eton boys of his time never did at all, his progress along the ordinary curriculum will seem sufficiently creditable. To be technical for a moment, 'at Easter 1843 he passed into the Fourth Form, taking the eleventh place in a form of thirty-six. In 1844 he went up into the 'Remove,' and in 1845 into the Fifth Form, keeping about the same place. After entrance into the Fifth Form, boys went up by seniority. When he left at Christmas 1846 he had just reached the Upper Division, Fifth Form. In those days mathematics

[1] 'Correspondence of Macvey Napier,' p. 415 (December 12, 1842).

[2] 'The Late Lord Lytton as a Novelist,' *Cornhill*, March 1873, p. 347.

formed no part of the school work, and he must have depended for his place entirely on classics.'[1] Still, some mathematics were taught, though they were no part of the 'school work,' and in 1846 Leslie was the prizeman of his division. In the same year his father, making a note about his three sons, said that Leslie was the cleverest, but added, 'Dear child! with him it will be a question of physical power.'

And now I must tell, in Mrs. Stephen's words, why it was that Leslie left Eton at the end of 1846, when he had just turned fourteen and was not yet 'in tails.' 'About this time James came to the full determination of removing Leslie at once from Eton. He received a note at the beginning of the holidays from Mr. Balston, in which, though praising Leslie for his conduct, diligence, &c., he spoke strongly of his want of success in composition, and his not having the power of perceiving beauty, the necessity of cultivating his taste, &c. This letter quite determined James to remove him, for he thought that if five years had been spent without success in learning to make Latin verses, it was no use to go on longer, and that Leslie would become depressed with the sense of want of success. He was, besides, very weary with the sameness of his lessons, having to go through the same books over and over again and the same set of lessons, so that he said he should become like a horse in a mill, going round and round.' And so Leslie Stephen had no power of perceiving beauty. Some one else must write the comment. Instead, I will copy some sentences from an essay 'In Praise of Walking,' written by one whose 'want of success in composition' is painfully obvious.

> The memory of school-days, if we may trust to the usual reminiscences, generally clusters round a flogging, or some solemn words from a spiritual teacher instilling the seed of a guiding principle of life. I remember a sermon or two rather ruefully; and I confess to memories of a

[1] This information has been kindly given me by the Provost of Eton, Dr. Hornby, to whom, and to the Vice-Provost, Mr. F. Warre Cornish, I tender my thanks.

flogging so unjust that I am even now stung by the thought of it. But what comes most spontaneously to my mind is the memory of certain strolls 'out of bounds' when I forgot the Latin grammar and enjoyed such a sense of the beauties of nature as is embodied for a child in a pond haunted by water rats or a field made romantic by threats of 'man-traps and spring guns.' Then after a crude fashion one was becoming more or less of a reflecting and individual being, not a mere automaton set in motion by pedagogic machinery.[1]

Further and better particulars, as the lawyers say, of that flogging are not to be had. The Stephen whom I knew never talked of his school-days, and one might walk through Eton with him and not discover that he knew the place better than Harrow. One of the most Cantabrigian of Cambridge men, he was the least Etonian of Eton men. I do not think that he had any dislike for the school; his two step-sons went there; but he had left it while he was very young, and there was little about it that he cared to remember. Upon various occasions he explained that when one of our great schools is said to have 'produced' one of our famous men, the word 'produced' means 'failed to extinguish.' So I can give no anecdotes, though here and there I might add a foot-note to some essay of his. For example, his first days at Eton were made laborious by the Anglican Catechism—he had been brought up on Watts—and afterwards he wrote something of 'that most irritating explanation of the Lord's Prayer, which neither the severity of the schoolmaster nor our own eager desire to be good could ever force into our youthful understanding.'[2] But in truth the best of what Leslie learnt at this time he learnt in the holidays. At Ilfracombe, high up in the rocks, his sister and he had made a 'Castle of Contentment,' as they called it, where many books were read. Composing fables in French for the eye of Mr. James Stephen was a different sort of task from the vain attempt to satisfy Mr. Balston's

[1] 'Studies of a Biographer,' vol. iii. p. 258.

[2] 'The Religious Difficulty,' *Fraser's Magazine*, May 1870, p. 625.

demand for faultless elegiacs. If Eton had taught him to row, Leslie might have become an enthusiastic Etonian.

The rest of his education, before he went to Cambridge, might be described as desultory. Briefly I will give the main facts. Just before he was taken from school he had lost his eldest brother. His parents had been summoned to Dresden to find their first-born dead. Windsor was haunted by sad memories, and I am not sure that Leslie would have been kept at Eton even if he had been in a fair way to become a second Ovid. His father settled at Wimbledon, and in February 1847 Leslie began to attend as a day-boy a school kept by Mr. Edelmann, where he had some seven or eight companions. He acquired some German, and was soon reading 'Maria Stuart' with enjoyment. He played cricket and rode his pony, being also much addicted to pets, including some Chinese mice. He could still look 'very pretty' when dressed in the robes of a Chinese bride, unpacked from the curiosity box of a missionary. The summer was spent at the beloved Ilfracombe, but not until at Bournemouth he had tasted, perhaps for the first time, the delights of rowing. In the autumn he had hardly gone back to Mr. Edelmann's before his father's health suddenly gave way. A winter in Italy was projected, and Paris was reached. A month was spent there. Leslie saw 'a great many sights' and had some lessons in Italian from the Abbé Pietri. Plans having been changed, the winter was passed, not in Italy but at Torquay, Leslie attending a tutor for an hour or two daily.

In the spring of 1848 the family returned to Wimbledon, and Leslie was entered as a student at King's College, London, to which he went for the first time on March 15. His brother, Fitzjames, had been there, but had lately gone to Cambridge. His cousins, the Diceys, were there, as were also a good many other youths who became in their various ways distinguished men. F. D. Maurice was teaching there; but of any influence that his teaching may have had upon Leslie Stephen, what has to be said will be better said hereafter. For the moment, it behoves us to remark that the time actually spent by Leslie in the college was not long. In the early part

of 1848 he was betaking himself with pleasure to a new kind of life, riding to Vauxhall and thence going by steamer to Somerset House, making good progress in his studies, taking deep interest in the Debating Society, and talking with his father about the subjects of debate. But in the summer an expedition with his cousins ended disastrously. It was his first absence from home, and he was introduced to those English lakes which in course of time were to be almost as dear to him as Switzerland. One of his companions remembers another introduction : an introduction to Wordsworth, given, so he thinks, by Sir James Stephen to his brother-in-law, Mr. Dicey ; but I take it that if Leslie himself had been of the party that visited the poet, he would have remembered and mentioned the visit, and this, so far as I am aware, he never did. But he fell ill with asthma. His father hurried to Bowness and found him looking pale and thin. The rest of the summer he passed with his parents in Scotland, chiefly in the manse at Burntisland. He spent his time 'sitting on the rocks on the little promontory, sometimes with a book, sometimes with a fishing-line.' The only fish that he caught was a large eel ; one of the books that he read was Lamartine's 'Girondins.' Once more there was fear that he would be lame. In the autumn he tried going to King's College, but, after a short experiment, it was decided that Wimbledon would be too cold for him, and the winter was once more passed at Torquay. He read some Greek and Latin by himself and some German with his sister. He took long rides with Sir James, who was just then preparing his essays for the press, and who must have poured forth many an instructive discourse.

Leslie, however, was anxious to return to King's College. He returned there in March 1849, and he attended lectures during the rest of the academic year. His home during this time was at Richmond ; but near the end of the year Sir James went to reside in Cambridge as professor, apparently under the mistaken belief that professors were expected to reside. The Christmas vacation brought Leslie to Cambridge for the first time. He learnt to skate upon the pond at Emmanuel, and spent much of his days in the reading-room at the Union

where Fitzjames had introduced him. He had 'succeeded extremely well in his examination at King's College,' so his mother says. 'In Mr. Maurice's class he was third. Stutzer,[1] tenth in his class. Mathematics, sixth in his department, third of the class. Classics, eighth.' After the vacation he went back to London, a lodging having been found for him close to the Diceys' house. 'He is to sleep there only, spending the whole day with his cousins.' He was under strict injunctions to attend the gymnasium of one Hamon. I have been told that in the opinion of the gymnast time was wasted on so unpromising a pupil. But once more his parents were alarmed when they saw him 'fatigued and exhausted.' A doctor thought London no place for him, and at Easter, 1850, he took leave of King's College. Then for a short while he was at Cambridge reading some classics and mathematics with Mr. Llewelyn Davies and performing exercises with a 'chest expander' provided by his sister's dancing-mistress. 'I remember him,' Mr. Davies has been good enough to say, 'as an intelligent and gentlemanly lad, fairly advanced in school work. He had then a fragile-looking and tremulous outer man.' Leslie, as I see from his letters, had pleasant memories of Mr. Davies, though they crossed swords at a later time. But this arrangement did not last long. In the summer vacation the Stephen family went into Norfolk, and there Sir James lay for a long while dangerously ill. At the end of September a start was made for Italy; but once more the journey ended in Paris. There for a fortnight Leslie 'greatly enjoyed himself,' and then returned to Cambridge as an undergraduate of Trinity Hall, though he was not yet eighteen years old.

During the last Christmas vacation, it had, says Lady Stephen, 'been a subject of great deliberation whether he should go to Trinity or to a small college, and it was at last unanimously decided that Trinity Hall would be the best place for him. The examinations at Trinity are very severe and frequently recurring, and [his father and brother] are both convinced that Leslie has not health to bear them. They think

[1] Mr. John Julius Stutzer was lecturer in English Literature and Modern History under Professor F. D. Maurice.

too that at Trinity Hall he is very likely to get a fellowship, which would be impossible at Trinity. His father being there is also a great recommendation. He himself seems completely to acquiesce in the wisdom of this decision.' So on the books of Trinity Hall, the college of which the Right Hon. the Regius Professor of Modern History was perhaps the most distinguished member, Leslie Stephen's name was entered.

I have felt it strange to write of him as of a very delicate lad and almost an invalid. He used indeed to say that he had been a 'weakling'; but until I saw his mother's journal I did not know how much he meant thereby. I must confess also that cousins of his on both sides of the family have told me they thought of him as a generally healthy boy. And healthy in most respects he must unquestionably have been: there can have been nothing wrong with heart or lungs. Nevertheless, I cannot believe that his mother was unduly solicitous, though after 1846 the death of his eldest brother, who also was very tall and very thin, gave point to her anxiety. Men who stood high in the medical world, physicians and surgeons, were consulted. They agreed in this, that Leslie must do little work with his brain, but must ride and row and live in the open air, or, when that was impossible, have recourse to the gymnasium or the 'chest expander.' I am not skilled in these matters, but those who read of the heroic struggle with the biographical dictionary and the consequences that ensued, will, I think, see cause to believe that Lady Stephen was not too careful of her son and to bless the expert advice and the maternal love which converted the 'weakling' into a mighty walker.

Altogether he had done well. He had some Latin, Greek, French, German, and a little Italian. He had mathematics enough to be brought to the standard of a good first class. He had done a deal of miscellaneous reading. 'I had the good fortune when a boy,' he said in later days, 'to read what is to me, I must confess, the most purely delightful of all books—I mean Boswell's "Life of Johnson." I read it from cover to cover, backward and forward, over and over, through

and through, till I nearly knew it by heart.'[1] '"Vanity Fair," he said at another time, 'was the first book that I ever bought for myself.'[2] Some years had passed since the poets were under the ban, and I suspect that few freshmen of his year would have beaten him in a straightaway 'spouting match,' for he never had need to learn poetry by heart. And then during those winters at Torquay he had been much in the company of his father, who had vast stores of knowledge to communicate, and who was not slow to lavish them upon those who would listen. I have, it is true, some reason for thinking that Sir James and his youngest son were not perfectly at ease in each other's company. It has been told me that in one respect they were too much alike: they were both extremely sensitive. 'I should imagine,' says my informant, 'that few sons ever gave less trouble to their fathers than Leslie, yet he was not on the same terms of familiar friendship that I was when a boy with mine. He was a shy, reserved, sensitive lad, and his "lack of effusion" (I know of no phrase expressing my meaning more clearly) stood in his way in his relations with his father.' I fancy that, though Leslie was an affectionate son and greatly admired Sir James, it was not without a certain feeling of relief that he found himself the master of a set of rooms in college.

[1] 'The Study of English Literature,' *Cornhill*, May 1887, p. 499.
[2] 'Some Early Impressions,' *National Review*, September 1903, p. 142.

IV

THE UNDERGRADUATE

(1850–1854)

'If I had the pen of Edward Gibbon,' wrote the sufficiently Gibbonian pen of Sir James Stephen, 'I could draw from my own early experience a picture which would form no unmeet comparison for that which he has bequeathed to us of his education at Oxford. The three or four years, during which I lived on the banks of the Cam, were passed in a very pleasant, though not a very cheap, hotel. But if they had been passed at the Clarendon in Bond Street, I do not think that the exchange would have deprived me of any aid for intellectual discipline or for acquiring literary or scientific knowledge.'[1] The professor of history proceeded handsomely to admit that in 1852 many and great changes had taken place since those old days; and in truth they had been considerable. There had been no Cambridge 'movement,' it is true; but a classical tripos had been instituted, the differential notation had been introduced, very good lectures on ancient philosophy might be heard, and the great Whewell, with whom Sir James was on friendly terms, had taken the moral and natural sciences under his august protection. Yet that pleasant hotel on the banks of the Cam, or, in other words, 'the College or Hall of the Holy and Undivided Trinity of Norwich,' was a queer little institution.

As a painter of Cambridge I have no intention of entering into competition with Leslie Stephen. In many moods, grave and gay, he returned to that favourite theme, from the days when, as 'a pert young journalist,' he drew those amusing

[1] Stephen: 'Lectures on the History of France,' p. vii.

sketches, over the 'flippancy' of which we shake our solemn heads, to the days when he cast a last look at the sleepy river. 'I love the sleepy river . . . not even the Alpine scenery is dearer to me.' No more steadfast lover has Cambridge ever had. And I think that he understood her as only the lover understands, and drew the best portraits of her that have ever yet been drawn. At any rate, I shall not pick up the brush that fell from his fingers. In the 'Life' of his brother and the 'Life of Fawcett' he painted with sufficient minuteness the surroundings of his own life at Cambridge. What he left out was himself, and it is this omission that I must feebly endeavour to supply.

First, however, we must observe—for this affected his career—that in going to Trinity Hall he went not only to a small college, but to a very small college with a distinctive character of its own. At this point it would be easy to digress into a history of 'the Civil Law' in England, for the production of civilians—of men, that is, who practised in the Admiralty Court and before the ecclesiastical tribunals—had been the special function of Trinity Hall; but the curious in this matter I must refer to the interesting pages of Mr. Malden.[1] When Leslie joined the college, the Master was a civilian, Sir Herbert Jenner Fust, whose recent judgment in the Gorham case had made a great stir in ecclesiastical circles. Then there were ten fellows who were lawyers, either civilians or common lawyers, and who rarely came to Cambridge, except to transact current business—to make elections, sanction leases, audit accounts—or to hold high festival at Christmastide. For educational purposes the college consisted of two 'presbyter fellows,' clerks in holy orders, who were the two tutors, and of a certain Goodbehere fellow, of whom more hereafter. It had been rare for 'a Hall man' to present himself for a tripos or take an honour degree in arts. If he was not content with 'the poll,' he 'went out' in law. Sir James Stephen had done this when he ended his stay at this comfortable hotel. The consequence was that the college had been unable to find 'presbyter fellows' within its own walls. The

[1] Malden: 'Trinity Hall,' 1902.

two tutors when Leslie entered were the Rev. William Marsh, who had been imported from Caius, and the Rev. Henry Latham, who had been imported from Trinity. They were beginning to nurse back into life a college which, owing to changes in the legal world, had been near to inanition. They were trying to attract men who would read for the triposes, and, no doubt, it was felt as a slur that the college had been obliged to look abroad for its tutors. Whether Sir James and his eldest son had thoughts of a tutorship for Leslie I cannot say, but, at least, their choice meant that if he was as successful as they hoped that he would be, he would soon be either a lawyer or a clergyman.

Though the worst days were over, the college was still very small. Judged by one test, namely, the number of members of the Senate that it could claim, it seems to have been the smallest college in Cambridge, except Downing, which, as the life of colleges is estimated, was still in its teens. Leslie's name was placed at the bottom of a list of forty-one undergraduates. That so small a college was represented on the river by two eight-oared boats says something for the energy of its members. It was not in any sense a college with a bad record. Bulwer Lytton and Alexander Cockburn had sojourned there. John Sterling and Frederick Maurice had migrated to it from Trinity, attracted by the ten fellowships set apart for lawyers. The typical 'Hall man,' so I gather, was likely to be a well-bred youth, who had been at a public school, and had some money to spend: not very intellectual, it is true, but a young gentleman of the sort that Leslie Stephen would learn to like.[1]

Leslie owed much to Cambridge, and in the first place health. This matter, of which I have been saying more than I could have wished, I can now dismiss with a few last words. There was no sudden change. So long as he was an under-

[1] Perhaps it may be well to explain that at Cambridge the terms 'college' and 'hall' do not point respectively to two different kinds of institution. Until modern times several of the 'colleges' were commonly called 'halls'—*e.g.*, Clare Hall. Trinity Hall would by this time have been known as Trinity College, had not that name belonged to a larger, though less ancient, foundation.

graduate he was being urged not to tax his strength by physical or mental exertion. But there was steady improvement. In 1852 Lady Stephen notes with pleasure that he can now walk as far as Sir James: in other words, that the undergraduate of nineteen years can keep up with the sexagenarian professor. In 1856, however, he has walked thirty-four miles, 'and does not seem in the least tired.' Though he was still weak in his arms—'could not make a dint in a pat of butter,' says a friend—he was becoming as tough as whipcord. He had reason to love the sleepy river and the wide stretch of fen.

His career as an undergraduate, without being brilliant, seems to me just that which a wise father might wish for his son. He works steadily, obtains a scholarship and a first-class in the tripos, rows energetically, delivers speeches at the Union, reads miscellaneously, makes friends, and, in general terms, gets the best that Cambridge has to give. I will speak first of the academic side of the story. At the end of his first year he gained a scholarship. 'He seemed,' says his mother, 'much pleased with his success.' He spent a great part of the long vacation with his parents, who had left Cambridge and were living at Richmond, and thrice a week he went to London to be taught mathematics by his cousin, James Wilberforce Stephen, a fourth wrangler, who was afterwards a judge in Victoria. At Cambridge his 'coach' was the famous Isaac Todhunter, of whom he drew more than one pleasant picture. His vacations seem to have been quietly passed, for the more part with his own family, but with visits to kinsfolk, to Venns and Diceys and his uncle Henry, the Stephen of 'Stephen's Commentaries.' I read of nothing exciting, but of studious days relieved by walks with his father, by the practice of shorthand, by a few more lessons in drawing and some sketching of trees in Richmond Park. In his second long vacation he went to Cambridge to work. In September Sir James 'wishing to give him some recreation after his long stay at Cambridge,' took him and his brother for a short tour on the continent. They saw Brussels, Ghent, Namur, Cologne and Amsterdam. They saw the field of Waterloo: a sight which the two sons

enjoyed more than did their father, who reflected that 'the work of dæmons was done there.' Where Leslie spent his last long vacation I do not know; but his industry was giving great satisfaction at home, though there was still some fear that it might be excessive. At last, in January 1854, he telegraphed that he was twentieth wrangler and added that he was 'quite content.'

'The contents have it *nem. con.*' replied Sir James. 'You are content and we are much more than content. We are grateful to God and to you—to God for his great mercy for giving you the strength and the will to do so much, and to you for the effort you have made. Nor can we avoid adding how grateful we are that in every single respect, so far as we have any means of knowledge, you have conducted yourself through your course as a man and a Christian should. We have never heard an ill report or an unkind word about you, and you have been frugal and therefore generous to the utmost of your power. Believing, as we do, that it will gladden you to know that you have given us so much happiness, we have only to say further, May God bless you in all your future stages of life as He has blessed you in your university career.' By way of comment on a letter which it has been pleasant to copy, I may remark that the professor had from time to time stayed in Cambridge for the delivery of his lectures and must have seen and heard more of Leslie than fathers often see and hear of sons at college. From many similar passages I take the following, written by Sir James from Cambridge to his wife, because it suggests the nature of the intercourse between the old man and the young. '(December 27, 1853.) Then Leslie came self-invited to walk with me. Of course I went and did my best to amuse him. I am at once gratified by his kindness and self-exalted by his liking for my company —or if he does not really like it (as how should he?) by the generosity with which he courts it.' There is true affection, but there is also some courtesy. They seem careful not to hurt each other's feelings.

Leslie had good reason to be content with his place in the mathematical tripos: a place in the middle of the first-class.

I am told by one who can speak with authority that 'it did not fairly represent his mathematical powers, which were very good, but which he rated very low indeed.' He was younger by at least a year than most of his competitors. Mr. Todhunter's exhortations had induced him to sacrifice one ambition, namely, that of holding office in the Union Debating Society. But he delivered himself of some nine orations, and had hardly been a month in Cambridge before he supported 'Lord Palmerston's policy on the Greek Question.' His opinions were already those of a young Liberal of the fifties. He was for the ballot, for 'an extensive measure of parliamentary reform,' for the education of the people, and for 'the proposed admission of dissenters to the universities.' When fifty years afterwards he said that his counsel, if it had been accepted, would have prevented the Boer War,[1] this was his way of saying that 'the British possessions at the Cape of Good Hope' would have been 'abandoned.' But I cannot find that on the minds of those who were at this time prominent members of the Society he left an impression comparable to that which had been made by his brother. He was, however, a member of the library committee, and this tells of a taste for books.

Meanwhile, he had discovered the river. I cannot, for want of records, prove that he rowed as a freshman; but, from 1852, for ten years no year passed without Leslie Stephen's rowing in the college races in the Lent term or the Easter term or both. Few men can have taken part in more 'bumps' actively and passively. While he was an undergraduate his place was number seven in the second boat. As a 'don' he descended into the third boat, for the rapid growth of Trinity Hall made a third boat possible. A good oar he could never be; but he became an enthusiastic or, to use his own phrase, a fanatical oarsman. Exactly when this fanaticism seized him I cannot tell; but there is little trace of it until he has taken his degree. He had a good many sides, and if to some eyes he appeared only as 'a rowing rough,' we must remember that now for the first time in his life he was strong and free.

[1] *National Review*, September 1903, p. 141.

Another picture I have from one who knew him intimately. 'In spite of his working hard at his studies and taking little part in the 'wines,' suppers and card-parties to which Trinity Hall in those days was much addicted, he soon became popular with his fellow students. There, as always, he lived his own life; but then, as afterwards, he had no desire to impose his own ideas and tastes upon others, and, beyond setting a good example by the steadiness of his life, he was ready to let the world wag its way.' As the member of a very small college, he had no great choice of friends, and he was too shy to seek them outside the walls. The presence of two cousins of his at Trinity led to his knowing some Trinity men; but his circle was not wide. I have sought information from several men who knew and admired him in after life and who might have known him then, but have had the same answer, to the effect that they wished that they had made his acquaintance, but that they were shy and he was shier. I am told of an essay society to which he belonged, but have failed to trace it with certainty in a place where clubs are as mushrooms. Of a certain small society, commonly called the Apostles—diligent readers of memoirs will know something of its history—Stephen never became a member. He regretted this both then and afterwards. To what he said in print of this matter [1] I will add a few words from a letter, written in 1901, which I have been allowed to see. 'You can hardly respect that body' —the society in question—'more than I do. It was one of my early disappointments that, though my brother had been a member, and his colleagues (specially X and Y) were friends of mine, I was not thought worthy of initiation. Let us hope that I learnt a lesson of humility.' A lesson in humility is good for most of us, but I do not feel sure that a lesson in self-confidence was not what Stephen needed more. However, I see references to 'a little set to which I belonged in my undergraduate days,' and which included men who were to be eminent enough, especially in the legal profession: 'F. Vaughan Hawkins, Frank Coltman, Howard Elphinstone, W. F. Robinson, and my cousins, Henry and Edward Dicey.' A

[1] *National Review*, September 1903, p. 140.

life-long friendship with James Payn, the born story-teller, was first knit in those days, and then or a little later Leslie became thick with Joseph Wolstenholme, who, to his other attractive qualities, added the power of reciting poetry, not figuratively by the yard, but literally by the mile, along all the roads round Cambridge. The close friendship with Henry Fawcett began in 1853, when Fawcett 'migrated' to Trinity Hall. 'He was to the end a very dear friend of mine,' wrote Stephen in 1895, 'although the differences between us were so great that I am inclined to think that it was only the accident of our living at the same college during the period most favourable to the formation of friendships that could have brought us together.' Of Stephen's friends I have not to write. One of the advantages of being his friend was that when you died something sufficiently true but very pleasant was written about you. Still, I think that at this time in his life those who most resembled him in intellect were not those with whom he most easily became acquainted. 'My recollection of him in those Cambridge days was of a tall, gaunt, and shy man, who read mathematics, and hovered on the edge of a conversation without boldly taking his part. A ludicrously false picture of the real man!' So writes one who learnt to know his worth. I do not think that the picture was 'ludicrously false'; but it was not complete. One part of the requisite supplement will be found in the following passage, taken from an essay on rowing by an anonymous writer:

> After all, the greatest pleasure in life is to have a fanatical enthusiasm about something. It may be the collection of pictures or of foreign postage stamps—the preaching of teetotalism or of ritualism; it matters comparatively little what is the hobby upon which a man should mount; but the possession of at least one hobby, if not of a complete stud of hobbies, is the first condition towards a thorough enjoyment of life. It is commonly said that chess is too severe an intellectual trial to be suitable as an amusement; and the argument is a very sound one against learning chess for those who cannot devote their time to it; but the intense attention

> which is willingly granted by a good chess player is the best proof of the powerful attractions of the occupation. Now this is the real glory of rowing; it is a temporary fanaticism of the most intense kind; whilst it lasts it is less a mere game than a religion. . . . Rowing brings back to me some unpleasant associations—especially certain hardships endured in a perfectly absurd attempt to reduce myself to a state of unnatural weakness, which was called 'training'—but it is also so closely bound up with memories of close and delightful intimacies, that it almost makes me sentimental. To my mind, the pleasantest of all such bonds are those which we form with fellow students by talking nonsense with them and mistaking it for philosophy; but an average undergraduate wants some more material bond, and I know none that acts with more energy than a common devotion to such an absorbing amusement.[1]

We will not follow the accustomed form and attribute this to the devil or Leslie Stephen. The devil should have no more than his due. I fancy that as an undergraduate Stephen had fewer opportunities than he desired of 'talking nonsense and mistaking it for philosophy.' But the shy youth was thirsting for friendship, and for the time found what he wanted in the 'fanatical enthusiasm' of the towing-path: a fanatical enthusiasm, however, which turns round to laugh at his own extravagance.

And the future man of letters, was he 'forming a style'? The reader shall judge for himself from almost the only material that I have, namely, a letter by brother to sister, preserved because of the exciting event of which it tells: the destruction by fire of a large part of the college. In passing I may observe that I have seen very few letters that throw any light on Stephen's life at Cambridge.

[1] 'British Sports and Pastimes,' edited by Anthony Trollope (reprinted from *St. Paul's Magazine*): Virtue, 1868, pp. 245–249. The article on 'Mountaineering' in this volume is ascribed to Stephen in the catalogue of the library of the Alpine Club, and, no doubt, correctly; but the article on 'Rowing' seems to me even more certainly his work, though the evidence is all of the internal kind.

February 20, 1852.

My dear Milly,—I write to inform you of a most everlasting smash, to use an elegant and appropriate expression, which has taken place at Trinity Hall, of which I will give you a full account. . . . .

I was awoke this morning when it was just light by hearing the man above me performing what appeared to be a war dance, and, as the last thing I had heard the night before was his performing the same operation, I supposed that he had been going on all night, at first. However, thinking something might be the matter, I went to the window and saw a confused crowd of gyps and bedmakers flitting about the court. So I went to the bottom of the staircase and howled out, 'What is the matter?' To which he replied (What do you guess? I am sure Mamma will guess right though for wrong reasons), 'My rooms are on fire.' I of course dressed with great speed and went down, when I found the flames were bursting out, not from the rooms above me, but from the rooms in a line with mine, *i.e.*, those which Papa used to have. Thereupon I rushed back to my rooms and began to carry forth my goods. I hauled out all my clothes and then my bullfinch; after which I set to work upon the furniture and books. My rooms soon began to fill with smoke, in the middle of which my gyp and I and several individuals of a philanthropic turn of mind, rushed up and down, conveying away all my goods. Meanwhile, I got the rooms cleared of everything in them, except the bookcase and one or two small articles. Then I went down into the court and worked at the engines which had come up. . . . How the fire started nobody knows. It was not done by a careless undergraduate, as far as can be made out, neither did I have any hand in setting it going whatever—of which facts I hope Mamma will take notice. I hope you will never complain of my telling you no news. I will write again on Sunday.

In a letter to Lady Stephen the fire is said to be 'one of the jolliest that I have seen for a long time'; and in answer to

maternal warnings, 'I must observe that it proves, not the danger of a college being burned, but the great difficulty of burning a college.' The present Master of Jesus College, Dr. Morgan, to whom I am heavily in debt for many a well-told story, thinks that this was probably the first occasion on which he saw Stephen putting forth his energy to the full—'a familiar spectacle to me in later years'—but he has a clearer memory of 'the mighty Whewell, who, clad in correct clerical attire and dominating all others in a long row of undergraduates and other helpers, passed the well-filled buckets with due dignity, yet, apparently, with an indifference to their weight that was worthy of a sturdy navvy.' Altogether Leslie was discovering that Trinity Hall was a very 'jolly' place. 'Our Master died yesterday, so we shall have to elect a new one.' We, indeed! Undergraduates do not usually elect the heads of houses. But the spirit of Trinity Hall was taking possession of Leslie Stephen.

Two of his minor accomplishments deserve passing notice at this point. His mother, being a Venn, could write shorthand, and she taught her children to write it.[1] In 1852 she remarked that within the last few months both her sons had taken it into their heads to practise shorthand again. 'Both now write to us in that language: an immense improvement. We have much longer letters than we used. They read it also, and thus a great deal of trouble is saved to us in our correspondence. . . .' Those who know the 'Sketches from Cambridge' may remember how the author 'earned eternal gratitude from the divinity professor' by practising this useful art while others 'were engaged in sleeping or making surreptitious bets or sketching flattering portraits of the lecturer.'[2] An extant note-book shows that this story was founded on fact. Some discourses on the Epistle to the Romans are represented therein very neatly, but to me illegibly, along with the substance of Mill's 'Political Economy.' This I take to be a memorial of the time when Leslie had to pass the 'voluntary' examination in theology and was beginning to feel the influence of Mill. Many later note-books are filled with the

[1] *See* Dr. John Venn's 'Annals of a Clerical Family,' p. 150.
[2] 'Sketches from Cambridge,' p. 131.

same script. It tantalises the uninitiated, but the 'long-hand' words which appear here and there are sufficient to show what Stephen is reading. To the end of his life he corresponded with his sister in shorthand, and it is due to her power of deciphering his symbols that I can say somewhat more of him than could otherwise have been said. His long letters written to his mother from America show that stenography has merits as a family bond.

To his practice of another art some reference has been made. Without setting up as a critic, I can say with confidence that Leslie had a turn for drawing, and could draw better than nine men out of ten. He ceased to cultivate the gift about the time when he took his degree, but long after this he would sit by the hour sketching remembered Alpine scenes for his mother's eye, or would send his wife an elaborate little picture of the houses in Courmayeur drawn with pen and ink. Later on he confined himself to the portrayal of beasts for the delectation of children: wonderful dogs and monkeys, bears and foxes. Even when he was far past middle age he could have illustrated a book of fables in a spirited manner, and the notes that he wrote with pencil on the fly-leaves of his books were relieved by grotesque animals drawn almost unconsciously in meditative moments. A copy of 'Lowell's Letters,' published in 1894, has a creditable giraffe in it, and a well-drawn badger adorns Mr. Balfour's 'Foundations of Belief.' He was a neat-handed man. When he was young his script was marvellously minute. He used, I believe, to boast that an article for the *Saturday Review* never required more than one sheet of paper. Much and rapid writing spoilt his hand, and before the end he puzzled the printers. As to the pictorial art, few men can have written so much about books and poems and natural scenery and have made so few references to pictures. Would it be impertinent to suggest that he knew enough about drawing to keep him silent where other literary critics would have talked? Pictures he enjoyed to the end of his days, but unfortunately most pictures are in galleries, and galleries are 'sights,' and 'sights,' as we shall soon learn, are, by definition, 'things not to be seen.'

But, to resume my tale, Cambridge had caught him and would not let him go. After the tripos in January he went back to college and was there during the three terms of 1854, reading, I take it, and rowing and hoping for a fellowship. In the long vacation he went abroad by himself for the first time. He went to Heidelberg to improve his German, and stayed in the house of a Dr. Weber, who, I believe, was the master of a school. There, after a while, he was joined by Mr. Edward Dicey, who tells me of admission to a student's club and of an endeavour to consume just enough beer to maintain the honour of England. Mr. Dicey does not think that Leslie attended lectures or was troubling himself with the theology or philosophy of the Germans. The cousins grew weary of Heidelberg sooner than they expected and came homeward down the Rhine.

Stephen had hardly a right to expect a fellowship as a matter of course. He had done well in the tripos, but had been beaten by another 'Hall man,' Mr. Robert Campbell. However, at the end of the year, when Mr. Campbell obtained one of the ordinary lay fellowships, a place was found for Stephen. He was appointed to a certain 'bye-fellowship,' namely, 'the Goodbehere fellowship.' Bye-fellowships are things of the past, and we may not pause to explain them. It must suffice that the Goodbehere fellow had no voice in the government of the college and received no share of the corporate revenue, but, in return for an income of about a hundred a year, provided by a special endowment, he was to assist the tutors in chapel and elsewhere. If not already ordained, he was bound to take orders within a year. Stephen was appointed to this post on December 23, 1854 and admitted on the 26th. He was, I fancy, encouraged from the first to believe that the bye-fellowship was only a stepping-stone. On the 27th his father, who was in Cambridge, where the fellows of Trinity Hall were assembled for their prolonged Christmas festival, wrote thus to Lady Stephen : 'I am more and more convinced that Leslie is the tutor as is to be. Indeed, I don't know how to invent a doubt about it.' In 1855 the Goodbehere fellow was rowing as captain of the second boat, attending the requisite lectures

on divinity and taking notes thereof in shorthand. In the long vacation he was at Heidelberg again with some Cambridge friends. He was reading his Greek Testament, improving his German, learning to take 'headers,' singing *Gaudeamus*, and seeing a little of student life. 'We then marched down arm-in-arm, man and man, to the Hirschgasse—by *we* meaning all the students, with fellows carrying torches on each side of us. . . . At the end the *Landesvater* was sung with the usual ceremonies and my Trinity Hall cap cut through. It was very jolly indeed.' After that there was a tramp with a friend in Tirol—the first real tramp with a knapsack. In the autumn he passed the 'voluntary' examination in theology, and on December 21 he was ordained a deacon at Bishopsthorpe by the Archbishop of York. Meanwhile Mr. Marsh, the senior tutor, had taken a college living, and on April 29, 1856, when 'the year of grace' had expired, the Rev. Leslie Stephen, B.A., aged twenty-three, became a 'presbyter fellow' and the junior tutor of Trinity Hall. The siren Cambridge had sung her song, and won such a lover as she has rarely had.[1]

[1] The college living that Mr. Marsh accepted had, I believe, fallen vacant in November 1854, so that when Stephen received the Goodbehere fellowship it may have been probable, or even certain, that Mr. Marsh's place would soon be vacated.

V

SKETCHES OF A DON AT CAMBRIDGE

(1854–1864)

The author of 'Sketches from Cambridge by a Don,' if he ever was a don at all—a question open to discussion—was a don for just ten years reckoned from his assumption of the Goodbehere fellowship. He resigned the tutorship in the summer of 1862, but remained in residence until the end of 1864. Then the days of his donhood ended. His fellowship he retained until it was vacated by his marriage in the summer of 1867.

His tutorship might, I believe, be described as thoroughly successful. Before I submit to my readers some part of the evidence upon which this opinion is based, I must in the first place observe that, whether any credit be due to Stephen or no, the college of which he was a tutor did eminently well. To say nothing of increasing numbers, we will apply the two obvious Cantabrigian tests. In 1859 it 'went' head of the river; in 1862 it not only 'went' head but 'finished' head. In 1863 it 'produced' (Stephen would have insisted upon inverted commas) a senior wrangler in the person of Mr. Robert Romer. The like of such events had never happened before. But it is alsc necessary to remark that Stephen was only one, and the junior, of the two tutors. The other was Mr. Henry Latham, the famous 'Ben,' whose name will always be associated with the growth of the college. For more than thirty-five years he was tutor, and for fourteen he was master. The college was to him both wife and child. I must be careful not to suggest that Trinity Hall owes less to him than is commonly supposed: the more careful because, to tell the truth, there was

at times some little friction between the two tutors. In the days of the first university reform, when new statutes were to be framed for the college, the difference in age, eleven years, between Latham and Stephen was likely to set them—and they were very different men—in opposite camps. In academic affairs the Stephen of that time was an advanced Radical, and I have his admission that the younger fellows occasionally made themselves unpleasant to their elders. Moreover, for some years Stephen stood nearer in age to his pupils than to his colleague, and he would sometimes regard a question of discipline from the undergraduate's point of view. Still *suum cuique*. If in the annals of 'the Hall' the high altar is for 'Ben,' there should be a side altar for Leslie, and, as the origin of Latham's nickname is generally supposed to be lost in obscurity, I may remark by the way that, so Stephen once told me, it arose out of some casual jest about 'Little Benjamin, their ruler.'

Some inquiry among Stephen's pupils has brought me letters which I would gladly print in full, and I must apologise to their writers for not doing so; but my space is limited, and I have also to remember that Stephen is not a candidate for canonisation. My principal witness will be the Lord Justice, Sir Robert Romer, who well knows the facts and assuredly can render to every man his due.

'It was in the year 1859 that I first went up as an undergraduate to Trinity Hall, and there met Leslie Stephen; and the friendship commenced which lasted all his life. At that time Stephen was second tutor, the senior tutor being Henry Latham, afterwards master of the college. The college had not then as many undergraduates as it has now; but it was increasing in importance and beginning to become one of the large colleges of the university. What the college owes to Latham is well recognised; but after the lapse of time the debt of gratitude that Trinity Hall men owe to Stephen for his part in increasing the prosperity of their college is not generally so completely recognised as it ought to be, except by his own contemporaries. This, no doubt, is largely due to the fact that he did not continue for many years tutor. But the

work that he did while he was in office left its lasting effect, and the influence for good he had upon all those who were undergraduates in his time was most remarkable. I wish I could do justice to him by adequately describing him as he revealed himself to me and his many other pupils; but it is very difficult for an unaccustomed pen properly to convey to others the salient features of a character, even though that character be wholly out of the common and be deeply graven on the mind of the writer. Perhaps I can best describe him, as he appears in my memory, by saying that he was a great athlete in mind and body, with a most generous and affectionate nature. That he was a great athlete in body was apparent to all. With a tall, almost gaunt body, devoid of all superfluous flesh and with muscles like steel, he was, for an amateur, one of the very best walkers and mountain climbers of his day. He never seemed to know what fatigue was.' And then, after speaking of Stephen's care for the college boat, Sir Robert proceeds thus: 'But I have already dwelt sufficiently, if not too much, on physical exercise. For it was not as an athlete even then that he was chiefly distinguished, or that he acquired the great influence that he had over the young men that were under him. What chiefly impressed and affected us was the keen intellect he displayed, coupled with the generous enthusiasm he had for the subjects that interested him—and they were many—and above all the warm heart that was apparent to all that knew him. Of course, the great interest he took in our games, and, in particular, in the boats, had its effect upon us; but it would be a mistake to suppose that we were chiefly absorbed in physical pursuits or that the great influence Stephen had upon us did not in a marked degree affect our mental and moral training and our subsequent careers in the world. I think those careers, if set forth in detail, would prove this. But I am not now writing the history of the college in Stephen's time. All I will permit myself to say now is that even the most enthusiastic rowing-men of the time were, generally speaking, doing good work for their various degrees, and I think they did credit to their tutor. I will just mention one 'first boat' in which I rowed, which was trained by Stephen and will serve a

a specimen. Of the survivors of the eight oars, besides myself, are Bayford, the well known K.C. (who was also, I may add, captain of the university eleven); Renshaw, K.C., the distinguished leader in the Chancery Division; Coventry (who rowed in the university eight) the county court judge; and Fitzgerald, who also rowed in the university eight and is now Sir R. Penrose Fitzgerald. Bearing in mind that the college was to a great extent a legal one, I think this example shows that under such a man as Leslie Stephen manly exercises may be followed, even enthusiastically, without unduly interfering with the serious objects of university life.'

The Lord Justice's testimony is, I am happy to say it, not yet finished, but for a moment I will turn to that which is borne by the Rev. F. F. Kelly, the Vicar of Camberwell:

'With the greatest pleasure I try to assist you. Leslie Stephen had been made junior tutor a very short time before I went up in October 1856. He had the greatest possible influence for good upon the undergraduates from the very first. I am only one of many who owe much to him. He was the personification of a "muscular Christian" of that date. No undergraduate of my time ever looked upon Stephen only as tutor and lecturer; he was a real friend to us, and sought to form and strengthen, purify and utilise, the characters of many of us. He took the deepest interest in our manly sports. He *made* that boat of 1859 which was the pioneer of all Trinity Hall's rowing successes during these last fifty years. . . . He did all this for the ulterior purpose of making men of us and not loafers. He had the full sympathy of our senior tutor, the lately deceased, well-known, and beloved Henry Latham; but it was Leslie Stephen who did the "making" of our and the next generation of undergraduates. . . . He, himself, told me that one great factor influencing his determination [to quit Cambridge] was his distress at having each year to part, perhaps for ever, with men in whose lives he had learnt to take a deep interest. The world even then would have called him retiring and difficult to know, for he was never pushing, and always the very opposite of self-appreciative; but [what I have just

said] will show in some measure what Leslie Stephen's heart was like. During his intercourse with us undergraduates he won us as much by his condescension to our level as by the example of high thinking and plain living that he gave us. He lived *with us* in fact . . . and he thus taught the Trinity Hall undergraduate to regard himself as having been sent into the world not to lead a selfish and pampered life, but in due course to leave the world the better for his having lived in it. . . . All too short did we—I can speak for many, very many, of us—think was our time at Trinity Hall; and certainly one reason was that the friendship with our young tutor had all along added a great deal of happiness to our lives. . . . A considerable number of us took holy orders, and no one of us that did could ever have to regret a single word that Stephen said to him. . . . His university life was a grand life of doing good to men at a critical time. . . . Pretty nearly any of us in those days would have done anything for Stephen.'

It is clear to me from what Mr. Kelly has told me of men —many of them are now dead—who 'loved Stephen,' or who 'worshipped dear old Stephen,' that Leslie's 'fanatical enthusiasm' for Trinity Hall was productive of 'many delightful intimacies' with young Englishmen of a very good sort. In much later days I have noticed that if he wanted to say his best word of a youth, he called him 'a manly, affectionate young fellow.' The manly young fellows at Trinity Hall were affectionate, and that was what Stephen wanted. The ease with which I have obtained proofs of this is the more remarkable, for Stephen left Cambridge some forty years before his death, and during the last quarter of his life saw very little of Trinity Hall ('it was too full of ghosts') or of the men whom he had taught there. But remembering the 'no flowers, by request' in which Alfred Ainger, one of Stephen's pupils, defined the principle of the biographical dictionary, I must turn to particulars, and first will say a word of the athletic feats.

Stephen himself had written nothing for the public when, in an early number of *Macmillan's Magazine*, Mr. Trevelyan,

now Sir George, singing the praises of the university boat, exclaimed :

> To keep at their side on the gods you must call
> For the wind of a tutor of Trinity Hall.[1]

It was a wind that was not to be 'pumped out' by the long run to Baitsbite and back, though the long run was also a long shout. A horse was rarely mounted by the 'coach' of those days, though I hear something of a caricaturist who caught the resemblance of a certain lean enthusiast to another 'don' upon Rosinante. I have Mr. R. A. Bayford's authority for saying that Stephen, though a bad oar himself, was a good coach. 'This came from his being a man of high ability who saw how the thing ought to be done.' 'I shall never forget,' says Mr. Kelly, 'the first day that I went down in the Hall boat, fresh from Eton, with the idea that there was not much in the rowing way that we had not already learnt there. All the way down I was "catching it."' Upon the arrival at Baitsbite, the captain of the boat had to comfort Mr. Kelly by telling him that Stephen must think highly of him or would not have taken such pains to instruct him. 'I knew ere long that it was just what I really needed.' And so the Hall 'went head' in 1859 and 1862. When a race was proceeding, Leslie trembled all over, says a lady who has stood by his side. 'I never shall forget the joy with which he caught hold of my hand and shook it when Trinity Hall first went head in 1859,' says the stroke of the boat, Mr. Bayford. 'He very nearly upset us all into the river, and, if I had not used some strong language, I believe he would have done so.' A Trinity man who looked in at the Hall that evening saw a wild scene. Stephen had tried to restrain the younger enthusiasts, but was being carried round the court. I doubt there was a happier man in the world. In 1862 he broke into verse. The Trinity Hall boating song did not take him many minutes, and has too many jests on the names of the crew to be worthy of exhumation. Still, here is the chorus, though it will not add to Sir Leslie's literary fame.

[1] *Macmillan's Magazine*, May 1860.

Then here's a health to old Trinity Hall!
A health to the captain, a health to us all!
To the men who have row'd us up head of the river!
We have got there at last;—may we stay there for ever.[1]

Then with the development of athletic sports, in the more technical sense of the term, Stephen had much to do. I have not investigated the antiquities of this subject and must give what I am told with some reserve. 'I almost think,' says one of his pupils, 'that Leslie Stephen might have claimed to be the founder of athletic sports. It was in Harry Hughes's large room that they began and received their impetus from the energy of Stephen. The sports were at first very primitive and rough, even condescending to foolish and absurd antics. Then, I think, something was done on Parker's Piece, and then Fenner's ground was the scene, with Stephen winning the two miles race. Then Trinity followed suit. . . .' I believe, however, that there is an Oxonian side of this tale, and it is not unlikely that other colleges would dispute the Hall's priority. However, certain it is that in 1860, when University Athletic 'Games' were still very new at Cambridge, the junior tutor of Trinity Hall won the mile in 5.4 and the two miles in 11.4. In the next year he won the two miles in 10.54. 'A snail's pace,' says irreverent youth; but the men of old time wore trousers and cricket shoes and ran on grass. In 1862 he walked a match against time, covering six miles and three-quarters, less seventy-five yards, in the appointed hour. In 1863 the Hall sports 'were brought to a conclusion by an exciting match between the Rev. L. Stephen and H. G. Kennedy, the former undertaking to walk two miles while the latter ran three.' The reverend gentleman walked his two miles in 16.45 and won by 230 yards.[2] In 1864 he made a similar match with a famous runner, Mr. P. M. Thornton, now member for Clapham. 'I only caught him in the last thirty yards,' Mr. Thornton kindly tells me, 'as his walking

[1] Mr. Kelly has given me a copy of the song. 'It was published (I gave the editor the original copy I had) in the Hall Magazine, *The Silver Crescent*, No. 10, December 1895.'

[2] The source of this information is 'The Cambridge Almanack.'

was fast to the last.' This scene became famous. Some say that before the end the walker had no clothes upon him except a shirt collar; but we may trust Sir Robert Romer. 'This race displayed Stephen's ever remarkable disregard for the minor amenities and conventionalities of life. He walked in it (without any special training, I may mention) in an old flannel shirt and ordinary trousers, and, as time went on, his shirt gradually worked up and had ultimately to be discarded, to the great scandal of some of his brother dons who were present and to the delight of all the undergraduates and strangers.' 'I have a hazy recollection,' says the present Master of Jesus, 'of the dolefully embarrassed expression of "Ben" Latham (the genial and successful senior tutor of the Hall) at the finish of the race, as he gazed on the form of his late colleague in the tuition exposed to undergraduate criticism in a costume the dimensions of which no one would have dared to reduce.' Thereupon a jocose mathematician invented an elaborate problem about the 'successive denudations' of 'a certain graduate, whose regard for appearances varies inversely as his velocity.'[1] His regard for appearances in the matter of costume seems, indeed, to have been a negative quantity. On the towing-path he would wear a pair of grey flannel trousers 'with a large, amorphous patch of reddish purple material in the seat thereof.' This, the only 'purple patch' with which Sir Leslie can be charged, had once, so he told a pupil, Mr. Renshaw, formed part of the petticoat of the wife of an Alpine guide, and the trousers had been torn by a jagged rock. But on the history of this 'unprepossessing garment,' as my informant calls it, we must not dwell. Lord Alverstone says that Stephen gave him invaluable assistance in the organisation of the university athletic club. The institution of the inter-university sports in 1864 would not, says Mr. Thornton, have been permitted by the dons, had it not been for men like Mr. Leslie Stephen and a few others. Whether he had not blown a fire that needed no blowing was a question that occurred to him in later life; but I have no warrant for saying that he was truly

[1] The problem can be found at full length in an article contributed by Mr. Thornton to the *Empire Review*, No. 12, vol. i. p. 656.

penitent. In 1903 he could still 'think with complacency' of the hot day on which he did his fifty miles from Cambridge to London in twelve hours to dine with the Alpine Club.[1] 'Of course you had a thoroughly good breakfast?' said his friend Morgan. 'Coffee and bread-and-butter,' was his answer.

'It may fairly be said'—I am repeating what Dr. Morgan has told me—'that Stephen was ready for a race of any sort at any time, and that he was never happier than when going his hardest in such a contest. His impetuous energies were strung to the full. Woe to the man who then ventured to balk or irritate him!' One day it is a race from the Railway Bridge to Baitsbite: Mr. Robert Burn, of Trinity, to run along the towing-path while Stephen takes the far more difficult Ditton side. 'At last Burn, a good runner, came in sight, trotting steadily round the obtuse corner of the towing-path. Soon afterwards we saw Stephen tearing at full speed like a hunted stag through bushes and over ditches along the other bank; but to no purpose, for Burn won by a short distance.' Another day Stephen is walking a match against time on the Huntingdon Road. 'A most ungenerous idea' occurred to Mr. Morgan, who was in an attendant dog-cart. 'I knew it would provoke one of his delightfully amusing fits of momentary temper. I jumped from the dog-cart and ran completely round him like the moon revolving round the earth. He looked furious and would have loved to aim a kick at me, but, realising that this would entail a fatal waste of time and energy, was compelled to let the ludicrous procession continue unbroken. How this match ended I cannot recollect, but I have not the slightest doubt I was forgiven long before the finish.' Then the Vicar of Eaton Socon declared that his parish had been invaded by 'four lunatics,' who, he was told, were clergymen from Cambridge. Stephen, Dr. Morgan, Porter of Peterhouse, and Wolstenholme had walked to Cambridge from Bedford. 'We left a post marked "Cambridge 30 miles" at 11.30 and reached the back gates of St. John's College at 6 P.M. We were dressed in our ordinary clothes and stopped at St. Neots for 43 minutes.' No halt for refreshment would there

[1] *National Review*, September 1903, p. 145.

have been if Stephen could have had his way. Even the streets of Vienna, Munich, and Dresden have seen Stephen racing. A point to point race, from museum to hotel, through a town, of the geography of which you know very little, is, Dr. Morgan says, a form of sport 'which calls into play a great variety of physical and intellectual energies.' The views of the German police I have failed to ascertain.

Of the volunteer movement also something might be told, for a claim that Stephen was one of the prime movers in the formation of the rifle corps at Cambridge is made on his behalf. I will only report one small scene. Sergeant Stephen (not he of the 'Commentaries') was putting a squad through the manual exercise in his rooms, and 'Order Arms!' had more than once been the word of command. A gyp entered bearing the compliments of the young gentleman in the rooms below, who was not known to be a hard reader, and a hope that his studies might not be interrupted by so much noise. The non-commissioned tutor was explosive; but an undergraduate officer, Mr. Bayford, from whom I have the story, was present and contrived to harmonise the demands of military and collegiate discipline.

We begin to get nearer the core of the man when we read of undergraduates swept out for long Sunday walks after early chapel. 'We walked so far and so fast that I had sometimes to go to bed when I came home, instead of going to supper.' Mr. Bayford, who says this, adds that the walking society was called the Boa Constrictor Club, and that Stephen, its president, was nicknamed the Old Serpent.[1] It came to the ears of Sir James that the undergraduates had subscribed to present Leslie with a walking-stick 'in honour of his having outwalked them all.' But those walks were not races. There are men who look back to them as to a liberal education. Their tutor was most at his ease when his legs were moving fast. The Vicar of Camberwell says that Stephen was always guarding his men

[1] I do not throw any doubt on the accuracy of Mr. Bayford's memory, and nicknames are transferred in very odd ways; but 'the Old Serpent' had been a nickname for Fawcett while he was an undergraduate, at least so Stephen says ('Life of Fawcett,' p. 21).

against idleness and effeminacy, and that these weekly tramps were organised for the better prevention of loafing. That the long walk is a moral agent of great power was an article of faith based upon personal experience. It would be affectation on our part not to see that 'the Comic Spirit' has depicted this trait for the delight of posterity. 'Have you walked far to-day?' Miss Middleton asked of Mr. Whitford. 'Nine and a half hours . . . I had to walk off my temper.' 'She cast her eyes on him, thinking of the pleasure of dealing with a temper honestly coltish and manfully open to a specific.'[1]

Let us see a little more of Stephen's ways with the young men. Mr. Horace Smith, now well known as author and magistrate, has written as follows: 'I and my old friend, the late Canon Ainger, went up to Trinity Hall the same year (1856). One of the first things to happen was our going to tea in Stephen's rooms. We were both from King's College, London, and it was not the custom for students to become intimate with the professors. To our surprise, and soon to our amusement and delight, we were ordered to poke the fire, put on the kettle, cut the bread and butter, and so on, in the most peremptory manner, and we were quite at home in a very few minutes. The gaunt figure, untidy dress, and very pronounced, if not harsh, features were soon lost in a pleasant smile and hearty manner. As time went on, we, as well as every other undergraduate in the college, came to feel he was our best friend, and I believe some of us almost worshipped him because of his enthusiastic interest in all our sports and doings. . . . I feel sure that no don (if don he could be called) was ever more beloved by undergraduates. . . . What delightful times we had there in the long vacation! Henry Fawcett and Stephen would often have supper with us either in their rooms or ours. Fawcett was a much greater, and I think better, talker (and eater) than Stephen; but the two together were always interesting.' Mr. Kelly too heard good talk. Stephen would open his window and call to any undergraduates who might be about, 'Now you fellows come over to tea here and bring your commons!' And then over there Mr. Kelly and

[1] 'The Egoist,' ch. viii.

his fellows would see some people worth seeing. Of the dead he mentions Charles Kingsley and Fawcett and W. G. Clark, and of the living Dr. Morgan. 'They entered heartily not only into the subjects dear to undergraduate hearts, but discussed many other matters such as politics, history, and so forth. . . . In these early days Stephen had already begun his historical and literary researches, and had invented a shorthand of his own, which enabled him with great ease to give references when his views were questioned.'[1] Mr. Kelly adds that Stephen was already especially conversant with American history. Certainly, as will appear hereafter, when the Civil War broke out, those talks between tutor and pupils were sometimes fiery, at least upon the tutor's side, for his young friends, so Sir Robert Romer says, knew that they could 'get a rise out of him,' indeed a passionate outburst, by affecting sympathy with the South. But, though there was unrestrained talk, Mr. Horace Smith says emphatically that familiarity never bred contempt: 'the man was far too strong physically and mentally for that!' Poetry, I should suppose, he kept for a highly favoured few. Some years afterwards Sir Robert Romer, when on a walk with Stephen, quoted a verse of Fitzgerald's Omar. 'To my intense astonishment, Stephen took up the words of the poem from the sentence I had quoted and went on without a break to the end.'

Of lectures my informants rarely speak. Stephen's business was to teach mathematics to 'the better men': not to 'the best men,' for, if a college obtained 'a really good man,' it showed its sense of his ability and its inability by setting him free from lectures. That was one of the absurdities which Stephen remembered when, having left Cambridge, he was advocating reform. It had, I am told, distressed him that in the way of mathematics he had nothing to teach Romer. Mathematical lectures that are not of a very advanced kind are not, I should suppose, memorable events in the lives of those that hear them. In the 'Sketches from Cambridge' a tale is told of an 'aquatic don' who, lecturing upon the Greek Testament,

[1] Stephen may have had some 'arbitraries' of his own; but the system was Gurney's, and his script can be read by those who know that system.

exclaims: 'Easy all! Hard word there! Smith, do you know what it means? No? No more don't I. Paddle on all!'[1] I have heard that story told of Stephen himself, but have some reason for thinking that a core of fact had been subjected to legitimate improvement. There was an English Essay prize, 'which we undergraduates called the Stephen prize because he practically awarded it,' says Mr. Horace Smith, who gained it in more than one year. In his old age Leslie was glad to hear that the prize had borne his name.

I might tell of other traits that undergraduates admired, especially of Spartan habits. The youth, for whom Wimbledon had been too cold a wintering place, had become a man who let the snow drift upon his bed through the open window. Leslie could enjoy a good dinner if there was good talk; but when he was left alone in charge of the undergraduates during a vacation, the cook grew tired of asking what should be served and sent the daily mutton chop without command. But with a few last sentences from Sir Robert Romer I must cut short what threatens to become a hymn of praise.

'I have now only a few words to say upon that which more than anything else attracted his friends to him and caused a warmth of friendship which few persons in the world are able to create. I refer to his generous and affectionate disposition. This was shown in a thousand ways, and not the least of its effects was that it enabled him to see and bring out all that was best in the young men who, as undergraduates, came under his influence. I could give numerous instances. I will content myself with giving one, which I may mention without any breach of confidence. One of the young men Leslie liked and believed in left the university intending to go to the Bar; but his means were small, and Stephen heard that he was thinking of giving up that for some other pursuit which would afford an immediate and necessary income. Stephen thereupon, though himself anything but a rich man, wrote and offered to his young friend, if he would go to the Bar, to supply him with five hundred pounds on the sole condition that if and when he succeeded he should repay it. I need not

[1] 'Sketches from Cambridge,' p. 119.

say how deeply moved the young friend was, though he was fortunately able to go to the Bar without availing himself of the generous offer. It is pleasant to think that his subsequent success justified Stephen's belief in him. I can only say in conclusion that fortunate beyond what falls to the lot of most undergraduates were those who were at Trinity Hall when Leslie Stephen was tutor.'

'His influence upon us was very good, but his methods were peculiar.' So says the recipient of the following letters, who, I may observe, took his degree, and has since played a very honourable part in public life.

[*Christmas*, 1861.]

MY DEAR ——,

. . . I very strongly recommend you to set to work seriously as soon as possible and make sure of the examination next term. At the same time, much as I should regret your departure, I think you had certainly better depart than go on doing nothing and humbugging the examination. Therefore, if you can't make up your mind to set to work, I must try to make up mine to be deprived of the pleasure of your society, which I should regret, not less on account of the deprivation itself, than for its displaying your unwillingness to set to work as you ought to do. Excuse this sermon, which as you are not here present, is not liable to interruption from chaff, and set it down to the sincere good wishes for your success of a well-meaning, though drivelling, don. We elected X a fellow the other day, and he and the rest of us have been eating ourselves ill ever since. However, I am off to-night. You will be glad to see we elected a Chancellor of the University [the Duke of Devonshire] who is in favour of the Ballot and Abolition of Church-rates.

Yours very truly,
LESLIE STEPHEN.

[P. S.] I hope to see you come up a reformed character next term, dropping in to tea every evening to talk history law and political economy. I shall be most happy to see you

Trin. Hall,
February 4, 1862.

My dear ——,

I write to you partly on my own account and partly as the mouthpiece of a disconsolate college and boat-club, to know whether you are coming up, and, if so, when you are coming up :—to which two questions your speedy answer will oblige me and the aforesaid college, &c. I hope that there is no doubt about your answer to the first. I should be extremely sorry if you were to give up your degree after keeping all your terms, because I feel so very strongly that you would repent it afterwards, and that, whatever you may think of it, it will always sound very badly in the ears of most people that you should have left the University without a degree. I therefore do most strongly exhort you to come up and do it—but won't waste my eloquence, seeing that I can trust you to supply that for yourself.

If you are coming up, please let me know when as soon as possible. I have only just turned up myself and commenced that miserable course of lectures in which I turn round like a horse in a mill. However, I must not grumble, as I get my bread by feeding the obtuse intellects and softening the stony hearts of undergraduates. I wish they were not such a dull and misguided generation ; but as they are, I must try to make the best of them, even of such as you. With this compliment I feel that I can leave off neatly.

Yours very truly,
Leslie Stephen.

It must, I think, be allowed that Stephen's 'methods' were 'peculiar,' and it is not clear to me that a tutor writing to a pupil should ever refer to the head of the college as 'old stick-in-the-mud.' But I leave that question to my youngers and betters.

Having seen a little of the impression that the tutor made upon his pupils, we may wish to see a little of the impression that pupils of a certain sort could make upon their tutor. I shall not, as a general rule, print passages from Stephen's

published writings ; his books are before the world and are never unreadable. But I shall make an exception in the case of some sentences in a lecture on 'Forgotten Benefactors,' delivered in 1895, because, without being guilty of any indiscretion, I am able to give some additional interest to what was publicly said. A name does give additional interest in such cases, and the name that the lecturer did not mention was that of Henry Salisbury Hughes, a younger brother of 'Tom' Hughes. He died young. Stephen preached a funeral sermon. Long afterwards he said that if a copy of that sermon existed—and a copy had been given to the young man's friends—it must be the only extant specimen (in this he was mistaken) of his discourses from a pulpit. But now let us hear the lecturer of 1895, who has forsaken pulpits but has not forgotten benefactors.

> Long years ago I knew a young man at college ; he was so far from being intellectually eminent that he had great difficulty in passing his examinations ; he died from the effects of an accident within a very short time after leaving the university, and hardly any one would now remember his name. He had not the smallest impression that there was anything remarkable about himself, and looked up to his teachers and his more brilliant companions with a loyal admiration which would have made him wonder that they should ever take notice of him. And yet I often thought then, and I believe, in looking back, that I thought rightly, that he was of more real use to his contemporaries than any one of the persons to whose influence they would most naturally refer as having affected their development. The secret was a very simple one. Without any special intellectual capacity, he somehow represented a beautiful moral type. He possessed the 'simple faith miscalled simplicity,' and was so absolutely unselfish, so conspicuously pure in his whole life and conduct, so unsuspicious of evil in others, so sweet and loyal in his nature, that to know him was to have before one's eyes an embodiment of some of the most lovable and really admirable qualities that a human being

can possess. . . . Young men were not always immaculate in those days ; I don't know that they are now ; some of them probably were vicious in conduct, and might be cynical in the views which they openly expressed. But whatever might be their failings, they were at the age when all but the depraved—that is, I hope and believe, all but a very small minority—were capable of being deeply impressed by this concrete example. They might affect to ridicule, but it was impossible that even the ridicule should not be of the kindly sort, blended and tempered with something that was more like awe—profound respect, at least, for the beauty of soul that underlay the humble exterior. . . . He would have been unfeignedly surprised to hear, what I most sincerely believe to have been the truth, that his tutor owed incomparably more to his living exemplification of what is meant by a character of unblemished purity and simplicity, than he owed to the tutor, whose respectable platitudes he received with unaffected humility.[1]

Looking back from the end of his life Stephen was not dissatisfied with his work at Trinity Hall. 'I was popular,' he wrote, 'with my pupils, being young: at first, indeed, as young as many of them, and very anxious to avoid the fault of "donnishness." Some of them, such as my friend Romer, have spoken gratefully of what they call my influence. I had, however, no influence of the kind possessed by Jowett. My chief means of keeping up familiarity with undergraduates was my interest in the boat-club and in various athletic pursuits.'

It is not to be imagined that a don 'who is very anxious to avoid the fault of donnishness' will be admired or even equitably judged by all his fellows. The graduate, whose regard for appearances not only 'varied inversely with his velocity,' but kept itself pretty constantly on the wrong side of zero, would set some reverend heads a-shaking. Nor can it be claimed for Stephen that he did what he could to conciliate the respectable ; indeed, it is to be feared that he found some joy in administering shocks to those who in his then language were 'stuck-up dons.'

[1] 'Social Rights and Duties,' 1896, vol. ii. pp. 247–9.

But apart from people who might deserve this name, and who would be none the worse for a little shocking, there were others of a different kind who could not believe that Stephen had any serious interests. When did he read? It was not easy to say. In the mornings he lectured on mathematics; but he was not pursuing his mathematical studies. In the afternoon he was screaming on the towing-path. The evening, so far as they knew, was devoted to 'boating shop,' or, at best, to talk over current politics. Late in life Stephen had occasion to consult a very distinguished man at Cambridge, and expressed his regret that in the old time they had seen but little of each other. The reply was: 'You took me for a sanctimonious prig, and I took you for a rowing rough, and I don't know which was nearest the mark.' 'I used,' says an informant, 'to go to his rooms occasionally for dinner, or the like, and certainly in those days he seemed to care absolutely for nothing but boating. The talk was of nothing but the place of the Trinity Hall boat, why the University boat had failed, how to make a better selection for next time, and so on. Probably some of this was affectation, and perhaps his intimate friends knew better what were his real tastes. I was so ignorant of his acquirements that I remember thinking it a bit of a job when he was nominated an examiner for the Moral Sciences Tripos in 1862; but the fact that he was so chosen shows that others knew better. The first intimation I can recall of his having any interest in philosophy was finding in a copy of Spencer's "First Principles," which I had taken from the University library, a sheet of notes written in his shorthand.' I think that Stephen was incapable of affectation properly so called; but I have no doubt that at times he made the most of his 'fanatical enthusiasm' for rowing. It served to keep at a distance men whom he thought—in some cases very wrongly—incapable of sympathising with some serious thoughts which were in his head and which were inducing him—I quote from my kind correspondent—'to kick his surplice into the cupboard.' It was easier to discuss the discarded shirt.

At any rate Stephen did read some books that were not light literature. Speaking of this time in much later days, he said that 'at Cambridge, where the standard was very low, I was

supposed to know something about philosophy,' and added that he had read some Mill, Comte, Kant, Hamilton, &c. Extant note-books, though written in shorthand, prove that he studied Maurice's 'Theological Essays,' Ricardo's 'Principles of Political Economy,' Butler's 'Analogy,' Comte's 'Positive Philosophy' (finished May 28, 1859), Kant's 'Kritik' in German (finished July 9, 1860), Guizot's 'History of Civilisation,' Cousin's 'Analysis of Kant,' Maine's 'Ancient Law,' Tocqueville's 'Ancien Régime' and 'Democracy in America,' Austin's 'Jurisprudence,' Cairnes's 'Slave Power,' Dumont's 'Bentham,' Montesquieu's 'Esprit des Lois,' Carlyle's 'Cromwell,' Buckle's 'History of Civilisation,' Whewell's 'History of Scientific Ideas,' Sir J. Herschell's Essays, Hamilton's edition of Reid's Works, Mill's Essays, Bunsen's 'Hippolytus,' 'The Wealth of Nations,' Baur's 'Paulus,' Grote's 'History of Greece,' James Mill's 'Analysis of the Human Mind,' Hume's Essays, some Berkeley, Freeman's 'History of Federal Government,' Herbert Spencer's Essays, Hobbes's 'Leviathan,' and so forth, besides a good deal of American history. When we remember that this was the reading of which notes have survived, we shall not be surprised that 'at Cambridge where the standard was very low,' Stephen was 'supposed to know something about philosophy,' nor shall we suspect 'a bit of a job' when he is appointed to examine in the Moral Sciences in 1861 and the two following years. Indeed I do not think that there can have been half a dozen men in Cambridge better equipped for that task or better acquainted with the epoch-making books.[1]

Mr. C. B. Clarke, who knew him intimately, says that at this time 'he could read German well (not then a common accomplishment at Cambridge) and did read much.' In 1861 he published—and this was, I believe, his 'Op. 1,'—his first appearance on the stage of literature—a translation of a book

[1] Stephen's first colleagues were Whewell, Mr. Joseph Mayor and Dr. Roby. It is to be remembered that Stephen took his degree in 1854, Dr. Venn in 1857, Henry Sidgwick in 1859, Prof. Marshall in 1865. In other words, Stephen was older than all the men who became the pillars of the school of moral sciences at Cambridge.

by Berlepsch—'The Alps, or Sketches of Life and Nature in the Mountains'—and one at least of his motives was a desire to perfect his German, though by this time the 'fanatical enthusiasm' for mountaineering had seized him, and, no doubt, he had pleasure in recording, in an introduction, the latest exploits of himself and his friends. Mr. Clarke also remembers some sermons which, so he says, showed traces of German influence in what was said about the Old Testament. He adds that there was much discussion of 'the Euclid of political economy' in the little 'set' to which Stephen and he belonged, especially during holidays spent at Wastdale, but that when Stephen and his special friend Wolstenholme were alone, the talk was of 'literature, English and French,' and there was much recitation of poetry. Sitting there in William Ritson's house after a day spent in roaming and clambering—an early, but not a 'first ascent' of the Pillar Rock was one of Stephen's feats[1]—Stephen would give out a line of Shelley or some other poet and say 'Go on, Joe!' 'Whereupon Wolstenholme would recite in a measured swing scores or hundreds of lines without any apparent effort.' To the same effect writes Dr. Morgan: 'Perhaps Stephen's extensive culture was most apparent when he was quietly smoking his pipe and discussing some question of special interest to him with Wolstenholme, one of the most brilliant of Cambridge mathematicians, whose acquaintance with the best English literature was almost encyclopædic,' and who, I may add, was deeply read in Balzac.

'Stephen thoroughly enjoyed,' Dr. Morgan adds, 'the various social gatherings when those present were mostly fellows of colleges, vigorous scholars and hard-headed wranglers, whose robust intellects he appreciated. On such occasions very bright and strong conversation was heard. All manner of subjects (except theology) came under review, from Tennyson to Mont Blanc.' Stephen especially enjoyed the talk that he heard at Trinity, where were W. G. Clark and George Brimley and other accomplished men. 'When admitted into their circle,' he wrote in 1899, 'I had something of the feeling of Boswell when elected to the Literary Club. I still

[1] Haskett Smith: 'Climbing in the British Isles—England,' p. 124.

think that the society was charming, and the conversation as good as I ever heard.'[1]

That while he retained the tutorship he thought of writing a book or even an article for a magazine I do not know. This period is represented only by the translated Berlepsch and two or three accounts of Alpine ascents. Next to these comes, so I believe, an article on 'An American Protectionist,' contributed to *Macmillan's Magazine* for December 1862. A first article had been rejected.[2] Incidentally I may observe that he kept no record of what he wrote for magazines, and that it was somewhat by chance that I stumbled upon this economic discourse. I fancy, however, that when in 1862 Stephen, for reasons that will be given hereafter, began to think that he might have to write books, he regarded political theory as the most attractive subject or that of which he knew most. A little treatise, which was to be called 'The Essence of Political Economy,' was begun at this time. A good deal of it I find neatly written in a note-book, and I observe that Stephen had already adopted the graphic method of illustrating supply and demand by means of curves—a method much more familiar now than it was early in the sixties.

The Cambridge world was, however, a little surprised and amused at the extreme ardour with which in 1863 he flung himself into the election of a professor of political economy. He has told the story of that spirited contest, and I shall not retell it.[3] The result was that Henry Fawcett received ninety votes, Mr. Joseph Mayor, eighty, Mr. Courtney, nineteen, Mr. Macleod, fourteen. Stephen had, I am assured, a better right than most men to form an opinion of the candidates, and was fully convinced of the merits of his friend. No one has suggested to me that friendship carried him too far; still, unquestionably, he was ardent, and as pleased when he saw 'old Fawcett' at the head of the poll as when he saw the Hall boat at the head of the river. 'I nearly got drunk,' is a contemporary confession. That he lost a bet seems to me

[1] Introduction to James Payn's 'Backwater of Life,' p. xiii.
[2] *National Review*, September 1904, p. 142.
[3] 'Life of Fawcett,' pp. 117–122.

characteristic of him; for, though ardent, he was never sanguine.

When he quitted Cambridge it was becoming generally apparent that in academic affairs he had a word to say, and that the word came from no 'rowing rough.' Of what we call 'university politics' little may here be told, and there is a sense in which university politics hardly existed in Stephen's day, such were the independence and autonomy of the colleges, and so loose the bond between them. Soon after he became tutor, a great campaign, that of the first University Reform, began to rage, but it took the shape of innumerable skirmishes fought in seventeen different theatres of war. As regards what happened in that little field in which Stephen was a combatant, the struggle at Trinity Hall can be more easily or, at least, more pleasantly studied than any of the other contests, for Stephen has painted it; but, as was his wont, he made himself a very subordinate figure in the picture.[1] I am only concerned to say that Stephen fought vigorously and pertinaciously on the side of radical reform. It should be added, however, that at this time or a little later he was a radical reformer in a sense in which his friend, Fawcett, whose exploits he chronicled, was a strong conservative. By this I mean that Stephen wished to see a really efficient university and not a mere congeries of colleges. In the sixties he was already advocating the reforms that were effected by the Second Commission in the eighties, and some that are still in the future. No one could be more enthusiastically collegiate. 'I can pardon Gardiner for burning a heretic or two, and I think less severely of Chesterfield's morality when I remember that, after all, they were Trinity Hall men.'[2] That might be so, but he thought that the revenues of his beloved college might be better employed in paying resident teachers than in paying non-resident prizemen, and he could 'fully subscribe' to the main articles of Mark Pattison's drastic programme. He had witnessed the depressing effect produced on 'one eminent professor'—no doubt his father—by a system which gave

[1] 'Life of Fawcett,' pp. 104–114.

[2] *The Nation* (New York), vol. iv. p. 54, January 17, 1867.

him no better audience than 'the intellectual refuse of the students.'[1]

One question arose while he was at Cambridge which induced him to publish a pamphlet.[2] The course provided for the 'poll man'—that is, for the man who does not read for honours—had been a mere prolongation of a schoolboy's work. It had become fairly plain that some change must be made, and divers proposals were put forward. One of the pamphleteers, Mr. Joseph Mayor, had asked the following question: 'Has that pestilent "muscular Christianity" brought us to this, that we have lost the old Greek μουσική and bare γυμναστκιή is left us?' Stephen seems to have thought that the question was pointed at him among others, though he said that he was not, as far as knew, a muscular Christian, and hoped that he was not pestilent. Into the merits of projects and counter-projects we must not go; but one little piece of Stephen's pamphlet may be given as a specimen of his style in academic debate. His words are good reading still.

> I would, therefore, have the University use language to the following effect: You, A.B., have been at school for nine or ten years and are now eighteen. During all that time you have been trying to acquire a smattering of Greek and Latin, and you can still scarcely scramble through an easy classic with a translation; moreover, if you live to the age of Methuselah, and are examined every three months, you will never do it much better. Therefore, give it up as a bad job, and the sooner the better. We will try to give

[1] See four articles in *Fraser's Magazine*: February 1868, p. 135, 'University Organization,' by a Don (authorship unquestionable, so I think); December 1870, 'Athletic Sports and University Studies,' by Leslie Stephen; September 1871, 'The Future of University Reform,' by Leslie Stephen; March 1874, 'University Endowments' (unsigned). These papers are a powerful attack on much that Fawcett defended.

[2] 'The Poll Degree from a Third Point of View,' by Leslie Stephen, M.A., Fellow of Trinity Hall: Macmillan, 1863. I owe to Mr. J. W. Clark, the Registrar of the University, my thanks for a sight of the pamphlets issued on this occasion. A copy of Stephen's is at the Cambridge Union; there is not one, I think, at the University Library or the British Museum.

you another chance. We can't put a very high polish upon you by any means whatever. We cannot send you away with a keen and sagacious intellect; nor can we teach you to work five hours a day; but you may have a certain amount of common sense left in you. You, or your parents and guardians, may still find it worth while to spend a little time and money in acquiring some knowledge which may be useful to you in after life, and we will put you in the way of doing it.

Stephen was not very hopeful of getting much *μουσική* into or out of the 'poll man,' and the blunt terms which he used on this and similar occasions seemed 'cynical' to some. People who discard the shirt that has 'worked up' and dissent from traditional creeds, educational and theological, must expect to be called cynics. How cynical Stephen was at this moment we shall see hereafter.

It was a pleasant life, the life of the celibate don of those days. Stephen in his old age liked to think of it, talk of it, write of it. But the question, whether it was not a little too pleasant, will occur to us: a little too pleasant for a man with Stephen's capacity of enjoying sport and talk and good fellowship. What would he have written had he remained at Cambridge? It is, perhaps, a foolish question. Be it remembered that he was not thirty years old when he resigned the tutorship. Happily, with all his capacity for enjoyment, there was at least one price that he would not pay for a pleasant life.

VI

THE PLAYGROUND OF EUROPE

(1855—1894)

Often happy in his choice of titles for his books, surely Stephen was never happier than when he invented 'The Playground of Europe.' Yet that name inadequately expresses what, as the years rolled on, he thought and felt about the Alps. Mr. Douglas Freshfield, who knew him well, has rightly said that 'the Alps were for Stephen a playground, but they were also a cathedral.'[1] In this chapter something will be said of his many visits to Switzerland, which are as prominent a feature in his life as are the Alps in the map of Europe. To the book that has just been mentioned—published in 1871 and recast in 1894—I must be content to send those who would understand how the self-same place could be both playground and sanctuary, though what I have to say of Stephen's life may give them a little assistance.

In 1855, when he had lately obtained a fellowship, Stephen had a tramp with a friend through the Bavarian Highlands and Tirol. His course took him to Munich, Ischl, Gastein, Obervellach, Stall, Heiligenblut, Ferleiten, Krimml, Innsbruck. The record thereof, which he wrote in shorthand, would have amused him in after days had he looked back at it. Clearly the final cause of mountains had not yet been revealed to him. The first snow-clad summits were seen from somewhere near Salzburg. 'We came upon some eternal snow, which was a novelty,' between Gastein and Malnitz, a guide having been procured. While at Heiligenblut, at

[1] *The Author*, April 1, 1904.

the foot of the Glockner (not yet a 'climbing centre') 'I got close up to the glacier to my great satisfaction.' Close up to a glacier! We must try to believe it. But let us see what followed. 'After looking at the glacier some time, as I turned to come back, I was creeping along the wet grass when my foot slipped and down I went, sliding quicker and quicker down the slope, and in about a minute I should have fallen into a chasm between the glacier and the hill, about ten feet deep, enough to break my arm or leg. However, sticking my nails hard into the earth I came to a rough place, where I went slower and managed to pull up—a lesson to look another time.' It seems almost cruel to disclose these small beginnings.

And they were hardly beginnings, for much as Stephen had enjoyed his tour, he did not rush back to the Alps on the first opportunity. His holiday in 1856 was spent in Scotland, and he had some yachting with one of his friends. In the next year he saw the mountains a second time; but I do not think that he sought them in the spirit of a mountaineer. His sister had not been well, and he proposed to take her 'to Switzerland or to the sea.' It was decided that they should go to Switzerland in the company of Mr. and Mrs. Russell Gurney. They travelled by the Little Saint Bernard to Courmayeur, and there Stephen made his first serious expedition on the ice. I am allowed to copy the following from a journal: '(*Aug.* 14). In the afternoon Leslie, Mr. Galton, Mr. Crompton, and two guides set out for the top of the Col du Géant. A hatchet was taken to cut footsteps in the ice, sacks to sleep in, and other preparations, about which there was a formidable, business-like air. They were to sleep in a hut four hours up the mountain, and then to proceed to the top of the Col. As they passed on, a shower came down upon us, and the clouds seemed gradually gathering, but their guides strongly encouraged their proceeding. The evening grew worse and worse. (*Sat.* 15). Pouring incessant rain! The poor mountaineers came down at half-past nine o'clock quite crestfallen. They had a most wretched night for their pains.' A few days afterwards, however, 'the Col du Géant

[was] performed again by Mr. Galton and Leslie successfully.' 'I have,' says Mr. Galton, 'the pleasantest recollection of the Col du Géant climb with Leslie Stephen, though as it is forty-eight years since, some of the details may have been forgotten or become blended with other and different walks of a like character. Thus I cannot recall where we slept. Anyhow, when we got on the snow, Stephen was irrepressible. He went up a low snow hill to the west, and ran and slid recklessly down it in the highest spirits. I was sorely afraid of possible disaster through hidden danger; but all ended well.' Of more climbing in this year I do not read. Stephen and his sister journeyed to Aosta, over the Great Saint Bernard and the Col de Balme to Chamonix, thence to Geneva, and so home; they had been away for little more than a month. But he had been bitten, and we know nowadays what a mosquito can do.

At this point I must transcribe a few words from one of the most attractive of Stephen's essays: the essay 'In Praise of Walking.' [1]

> When long ago the Alps cast their spell upon me, it was woven in a great degree by the eloquence of 'Modern Painters.' I hoped to share Ruskin's ecstasies in a reverent worship of Mont Blanc and the Matterhorn. The influence of any cult, however, depends upon the character of the worshipper, and I fear that in this case the charm operated rather perversely. It stimulated a passion for climbing which absorbed my energies and distracted me from the prophet's loftier teaching. I might have followed him from the mountains to picture galleries, and spent among the stones of Venice hours which I devoted to attacking hitherto unascended peaks and so losing my last chance of becoming an art critic. I became a fair judge of an Alpine guide, but I do not even know how to make a judicious allusion to Botticelli or Tintoretto. I can't say I feel the smallest remorse. I had a good time and at least escaped one temptation to talking nonsense.

[1] 'Studies of a Biographer,' iii. 268.

When one has begun to quote the 'Praise of Walking,' it is not easy to stop. But stop I must. According to the rules of the biographer's art, this would be the place for a rapid sketch of the history of mountaineering. I cannot draw it, and must content myself with the remark that just when Stephen was entering the ice-world and behaving, so we may gather, as an 'irrepressible' novice, the Alpine Club was taking shape. It was conceived in the autumn of 1857, and born in the spring of 1858. Few books of 1859 were more brilliantly successful or more truly 'epoch-making' than the first volume of 'Peaks, Passes and Glaciers,' though this was the year of 'The Origin of Species.' Stephen was not one of the original members of the Club, and I do not think that in 1857 he had been brought into close contact with any of the men who must be regarded as its fathers, though he soon became the intimate associate of many or all of them. He who did more than any one else to propagate in a literary form the faith of the climber attributed his own conversion to another zealous and persuasive preacher. Sir Alfred Wills published in 1856 his 'Wanderings in the High Alps,' and therein told of the exciting conquest of the Wetterhorn. Forty years afterwards M. Gabriel Loppé, the dearest to Stephen of all his Alpine friends, asked him to take part in a domestic festival at Chamonix which was to commemorate the jubilee as mountaineers of M. Loppé and Mr. Justice Wills. Stephen gave reasons why he could not leave England. 'Ainsi je resterai chez moi, et je puis seulement vous prier de donner mes félicitations à Wills et mes regrets que je ne puis pas vous joindre. J'ai toujours regardé Wills comme une espèce de parrain Alpin.' Wills, he added, had infected him with mountain fever. Parenthetically be it said that Stephen could write with running pen a sort of French of which M. Loppé speaks thus: 'Stephen m'écrivait toujours dans ma langue natale. Ses lettres étaient si claires, si délicatement exprimées que ses paroles écrites rapidement, souvent traduites mot à mot de l'anglais, donnaient toujours un charme particulier à sa pensée.' But it was not until 1871 that he became well acquainted with the painter of the high

Alps, and our tale calls us back to 1857 when the mountain fever seized him.

The next year was the year of his apprenticeship. All that can here be chronicled is that he spent some six weeks among the mountains, that he had Mr. Hinchliff as a companion, and Melchior Anderegg as a guide, and that he ascended Monte Rosa: a good beginning for an industrious apprentice.[1] On his return to England he joined the Club along with John Tyndall. Then began the great years. Stephen kept no record of his climbs, and the printed sources of information rarely tell of any but 'first ascents.' A goodly number of these, however, can be placed to his credit, and they are sufficient to explain why in a short time he stood in the first rank of English mountaineers.

In 1859 he traversed the Eiger Joch with William and George Mathews;[2] he ascended the Rimpfischhorn with Dr. Robert Liveing;[3] he ascended the Bietschhorn;[4] he ascended the Dom, but in this instance he was following the lead of his tutor Mr. Llewelyn Davies;[5] and he unsuccessfully assaulted the as yet unconquered Weisshorn.[6] His expedition was cut short by his father's death. In 1860 he was 'much thwarted by the weather,' so his mother remarks; still he discovered and crossed the Alphubel Joch,[7] made a 'second ascent' of the Allalinhorn with Mr. Short,[8] and a 'first ascent' of the Blumlis Alp with Dr. Liveing and Mr. Stone;[9] also (but this had been done by others) he gazed down from the giddy summit of the Wetterhorn.[10] In 1861 he vanquished the Schreckhorn, 'the grimmest fiend of the

[1] Whymper: 'Scrambles in the Alps,' ed. 4, p. 180. The ascent of Monte Rosa (Aug. 28) is noted on the back of a map. That mountain was first subdued in 1855. Mr. Hinchliff had climbed it in 1856 His 'Summer Months among the Alps' was published in 1857.

[2] 'Playground,' p. 114. I cite the 'Silver Library' edition, 1901.

[3] Ball's 'Guide to the Western Alps' (Alpine Club edition), p. 510.

[4] *Alpine Journal*, i. 353.

[5] 'Guide to Western Alps,' p. 510. 'Vacation Tourists in 1860,' ed. Galton, p. 269.

[6] *Journal*, xiii. 18 (an obituary notice of his friend John Ormsby).

[7] 'Guide to Western Alps,' p. 544. [8] 'Vacation Tourists,' p. 264.

[9] *Journal*, i. 353. [10] 'Vacation Tourists,' p. 264.

Oberland,'[1] and with Mr. Tuckett he made the first complete ascent of Mont Blanc by the St. Gervais route.[2] Before this he had been a spectator of an accident that is not likely to be forgotten in the Alpine world: Mr. Birkbeck's involuntary glissade for many hundred feet on the Col de Miage.[3] When the other members of the party found their comrade still alive but in an almost desperate plight, Stephen set off for Chamonix to procure medical aid. He long remembered that walk, and thus the editor of the *Cornhill* wrote in 1876 to Mr. James Sully, the psychologist, who had sent him an article on 'Dreams.' 'I had been unable to sleep all night, as we had only bare rocks to lie upon. . . . I fell asleep as I walked, or half asleep, and, as I got near Chamouni, saw both the real objects and the dream-objects. I met, *e.g.*, Cambridge friends coming along the road, who vanished as I approached, or saw carts or houses which fitted in with the scenery and then disappeared. . . . [This] I fancy explains some ghost stories.'

A letter to a pupil will break the monotony of a catalogue of exploits compiled by one who cannot ascribe to each achievement its proper value.

TRINITY HALL, CAMBRIDGE, *Oct.* 25, 1861.

MY DEAR ——, I am not at the bottom of a crevasse, nor do my bones 'lie bleaching on the Alpine mountains cold' (as the poet remarks) and consequently I am very anxious to hear how you are getting on. . . .

I dare say you would profess a certain curiosity to hear of my doings if we were talking instead of communicating by letter, and, though I know that the said profession would be chiefly hypocritical, I will give you credit for a desire to hear something about it. I therefore beg to inform you that my principal performances have been two. In the first place, I pretty nearly smashed a young man, and did almost entirely flay him—*i.e.*, he tumbled whilst I was not looking, and took pretty nearly all the skin off, but

[1] 'Peaks, Passes and Glaciers,' ser. 2, p. 3. 'Playground,' p. 70.
[2] 'Guide to Western Alps,' p. 353.
[3] 'Peaks, Passes and Glaciers,' ser. 2, p. 208.

managed to slide 1500 feet without breaking anything. He escaped almost by a miracle and had a very narrow shave afterwards, but is now getting all right. However, perhaps you saw the account in the *Times*, and at any rate I prefer talking about these things to writing about them, because it is quicker and one can tell more lies. Secondly, I got up the Schreekhorn [*sic*] which has never been done before, and the said Schreekhorn is (Oh, you ignorant brute not to know it!) one of the finest mountains in the Oberland, and the finest that was not yet done, and consequently the ascent was a very creditable performance. Well, I expect that is about as much of the Alps as you can take down at once. . . . This place is sufficiently dull just now, and to get rid of the dulness I have adopted the new and unheard of plan of reading. It is not a bad amusement when you have nothing else to do.

My love, respects, or whatever is proper to whoever you are with—which as I don't know who it is, I can't say what message I ought to send them, if any, and believe me to be very anxious to hear from you, and also to be

Yours affectionately,

LESLIE STEPHEN.

The year 1862 saw the first passage of the Jungfrau Joch, with Hardy, Liveing, Morgan, George and Moore;[1] the first passage of the Viescher Joch with Hardy, Liveing and Morgan;[2] the first ascent of the Monte della Disgrazia with E. S. Kennedy,[3] and a 'second ascent' of the Weisshorn.[4] Also by chance I hear of Stephen in the Bernina country, and he ended at Vienna. The next summer was devoted to no playground, but, as we shall see hereafter, to the seat of war in America. In 1864 the Lyskamm was climbed from the west with E. N. Buxton;[5] the Zinal Rothhorn was climbed with Grove[6] (this, I take it, was a very fine performance); the Jungfrau was climbed from Lauterbrunnen with Grove

[1] 'Playground,' p. 139. [2] 'Playground,' p. 159. [3] *Journal*, i. 3.
[4] 'Guide to Western Alps,' p. 509. [5] *Journal*, i. 377.
[6] 'Playground,' p. 89.

and Macdonald.[1] At this time Stephen left Cambridge, and in 1865—famous in Alpine annals as the Matterhorn year—he was so busily engaged in learning his trade as a journalist that he did not, I think, cross the sea. In 1866 he visited the Eastern Carpathians with Mr. Bryce, but before so doing he had accomplished what was for him the most memorable of all his ascents. It was only an ascent of the Riffel with three young ladies. In the next year he was married, and wrote 'The Regrets of a Mountaineer.'[2] Fate, so he said, had cut him off in the flower of his youth and doomed him to be for the future a non-climbing animal. 'I wander at the foot of the gigantic Alps and look up longingly to their summits, which are apparently so near, and yet know that they are divided from me by an impassable gulf.'

It was early to write thus, and, when Stephen published these 'regrets,'[3] he knew that, though he might be debarred from 'taking extra hazardous risks,' a considerable liberty of seeking high places would be allowed him. Nevertheless, his 'first manner,' if we may so speak, had come to an end. In 1865 he was elected President of the Alpine Club for three years. Nothing could be more distasteful to him than a comparison of his exploits with those of his comrades; still it is admitted on all hands that the honour which was done him by the Club had been fairly won. 'No one,' says Mr. Bryce, 'has a more interesting record of new expeditions,'[4] and it should be remembered that when English mountaineers are in search of a president, their choice is likely to be determined by certain qualities of heart and head which are not always found in conjunction with the longest score of subjugated peaks.

We will briefly pursue to an end the tale of Stephen's Alpine excursions. There was a honeymoon in 1867, and for once he was content to look at his old friends from their bases. A journey to America occupied his holiday in 1868, and then in seven consecutive years he approached the mountains in his second manner. Four times his wife was with him,

[1] *Journal*, i. 434.
[2] 'Playground,' p. 303.
[3] *Cornhill*, November 1867.
[4] *Alpine Journal*, xxii. 141.

and gradually she learned that he was as safe upon a glacier as in the streets of London. As a general rule 'first ascents' were to be avoided—most peaks that were not very difficult had by this time been scaled; but still in 1869, turning from familiar haunts to a little-known group of dolomites, he secured the Cima di Ball and the Passo Pravitale.[1] In 1871 Mont Mallet fell to him, Wallroth and Loppé.[2] He called Mont Mallet 'that child of my old age.' In 1873 he made the Col des Hirondelles with Loppé, T. S. Kennedy and J. G. Marshall,[3] and with M. Loppé he saw the sunset from the summit of Mont Blanc.[4] In the next year he and M. Loppé stood at the spot on the Brouillard Glacier where Mr. Marshall and his guide had been killed a few days earlier, and they heard the story told by the porter who had escaped with his life. 'Stephen et moi,' says M. Loppé, 'nous écoutions attentivement le récit que nous faisait, au bord de l'abîme, le seul homme qui en était sorti vivant. Dans cette combe sauvage où les avalanches n'ont laissé que des décombres de roches brisées, nous étions profondément émus. Deux jours après nous traversions, en compagnie de Mr. F. Gibbs, le Col du Géant, et nous rentrions le soir à Chamonix. Ce fut, je pense, la dernière grande course que Stephen a faite, en été, dans les Alpes.' And so Stephen ended where he began, on 'that king of passes.'[5] We may be sure that this time he did not behave in the reckless manner that had alarmed Mr. Galton in 1857. The summer of 1875 he passed in the Oberland with his wife, but the weather was bad, and nothing of much note was accomplished.

Then there was another change in his view of the Alps. His wife died. Nine times more he went to Switzerland: always in the winter, always to meet M. Loppé, always in the spirit of a pilgrim who is visiting the holy land. Still ascents were made, which, when climbing in the winter was a very new sport, were, I take it, creditable. Thus the Titlis was scaled and the Schwartzhorn from Davos, and the Mettelhorn

[1] 'Playground,' p. 266. 'Die Erschliessung der Ostalpen,' ed. E. Richter, pp. 422, 432. [2] *Journal*, v. 289.
[3] 'Playground,' p. 168. [4] 'Playground,' p. 257. [5] 'Playground,' p. 189.

from Zermatt. The last pilgrimage was made in 1894, when Stephen stayed in M. Loppé's house at Chamonix. 'Les courses que nous entreprîmes ne dépassèrent pas les limites de la vallée : au Montanvers, du côté d'Argentières et du Tour, à Planpraz, la traversée du glacier des Bossons rendue assez pénible à cause de la quantité de neige accumulée sur les deux moraines du glacier. C'était encore une époque où la visite d'un touriste en hiver était très rare à Chamonix.' Stephen hoped that he had not yet said his farewell to the Alps. As late as 1899 he 'hesitated between Chamonix and the Canaries,' but was compelled to stay at home. His love of the Swiss mountains expired with his last breath. Whether they were ever loved as ardently and persistently by any other man seems to me doubtful.

We have rapidly run over a long space of time—from 1855 to 1894—during which Stephen had some five-and-twenty Alpine holidays. This we have done because, in its final shape, the book in which he said his say about the 'Playground of Europe,' though it does not lack a real unity, contains papers that belong to three different periods. Let the reader contrast 'The Eiger Joch' with 'The Sunset from Mont Blanc,'[1] and that with the prose-poem—for such it is—'The Alps in Winter.'[2] It is the same Stephen that writes all three, but the love of sheer sport and good fellowship has given place to an admiration for shapes and colours seen by none who stay below, and then this is blent with memories, of which little can be openly said, but which stir every fibre of the man who is writing. However, let it be confessed that we have sinned against the canons of orderly biography, and let us go back as quickly as possible to the young Cambridge 'don' who in the course of two or three years put himself in the forefront of the climbing fraternity.

The novice of 1857 learnt his business rapidly. In his old age a few youthful sins lay upon his conscience. A stone was dislodged and struck a guide. On an easy pass the rope was neglected, and Stephen found himself wedged in a crevasse,

[1] Originally in the *Cornhill* for October 1873.
[2] Originally in the *Cornhill* for March 1877.

but was extricable. His conscience, however, was tender and retentive. I do not think that he had much cause for remorse. Mr. Whymper spoke of him as the 'fleetest of foot of the whole Alpine brotherhood.'[1] Some one said that 'he strode from peak to peak like a pair of compasses.'[2] 'He never dreamed of the modern folly of record-breaking'—so says Mr. Hereford George. 'Racing in the Alps,' he himself said, 'is an utter abomination, and I have never been guilty of such a crime; except, indeed, once in an ascent of Mont Blanc, and again, I fear, in a dash up the Æggischhorn, and yet once or twice more on some of the Oberland peaks, and perhaps on a few other occasions, which I decline to mention more particularly at the present moment.'[3] He was not, I think, above or below the law which compels us mortals to bring our doings within the category of time; but the nearest approach to a boast of celerity that I have seen—and it is not very near—comes from days when he was supposed to have abandoned perilous excursions. He wrote thus to his mother in 1869, from Santa Catarina: 'On Monday I went up to the highest peak in this district called the Königspitz. The expedition reminded me of former days in Switzerland. It was not particularly difficult, but is a really good, handsome mountain of the best kind. It took me eight hours to get to the top, and four to return, which was very quick, and astonished my guide, who declares that I am the best walker he has ever seen, which is not surprising, considering that he has only seen a few Germans and stray English. The view from the top was nothing, as it was cloudy, but I had some very fine views going up and down, and enjoyed a good walk once more.'[4]

A little wil' now be collected from those who were with

[1] 'Scrambles in the Alps,' ed. 4. p. 261.

[2] Mr. Frederick Greenwood in the *Pilot* (of pleasant memory) for Feb. 27, 1904, gives the saying thus: 'Stephen walked from Alp to Alp like a pair of one-inch compasses over a large-sized map.' A similar saying is attributed to Norman MacColl of the *Athenæum* in the days of the Sunday Tramps: 'How is one to keep up with a man who strides like a pair of compasses?'

[3] 'Playground,' p. 185.

[4] For this ascent of the Königspitz, *see* 'Playground,' p. 221.

Stephen on the ice. His comrades of the first period are becoming few. Mr. C. E. Mathews had very kindly promised me some reminiscences, but his lamented death has prevented the fulfilment of the promise. Happily he had said a few words which tell of something better than thews and sinews. 'I knew Leslie Stephen for forty-four years, and I accompanied him on a memorable ascent of the Bietschhorn. He was one of the most admirable and brilliant of climbers, and one of the most charming of men of letters. His "Playground" will always be a classic, and there are passages in it which show that he was a poet as well. Under a somewhat brusque exterior he concealed one of the sweetest and kindest hearts ever given to the sons of men.'[1] Mr. Edward Whymper has written to a like effect. 'Of all the men I have met in the Alps, no one attracted me so much as Leslie Stephen. It was not so much because he was an athlete and a conspicuous mountaineer as from the fact—obvious to a mere boy—that he towered head and shoulders above the rest. As time went on, one found that to the physical and intellectual qualities were united tenderness of heart and generosity. If you consult those who knew him as long as myself, I think you will find unanimity of opinion.' But more concrete information may be desired at this point and can be supplied by Dr. Morgan who accompanied Stephen over the Jungfrau Joch and the Viescher Joch in 1862. Is it not written in the chronicles of the 'Playground' that 'Morgan sang us some of the songs of his native land,' and was reluctantly forced to confess that he knew nothing in Wales exactly like the solitary grandeur of the Mönch?

'In June 1862 I was asked to join Stephen, Hardy and R. Liveing in an expedition to Switzerland, the main object of which was to do the Jungfrau Joch. As I had not been there before, I naturally inquired what the Jungfrau Joch was. Stephen informed me that it was said to be a Joch which could not be done, and therefore it must be done, or words to that effect. Having no particular engagement for the summer, I agreed to go, and a few weeks later the four of

[1] *Alpine Journal*, xxii. 164.

us started from Engelberg early one morning to do the Titlis, as a little mountain exercise was thought desirable before we attacked the Joch. In due course we reached the snow which was soft and deep, so that our progress was slow and tedious. Soon our two friends very wisely decided to turn back, and prudently taking our one guide—who carried the lunch—with them, observed that we should find them at the Engstlen Alp. Stephen and I, however, continued to trudge on until we reached the summit, where my first view from an Alpine top was rendered exceptionally interesting from the fact of my being under the tutelage of so accomplished a mountaineer.

'By the time we had descended to the grass slopes on our way to the Engstlen Alp we were both sorely in need of sustenance. That Alp was at a considerable distance, yet no supplies were nearer. Our position was becoming decidedly gloomy when we were cheered by the sight of a cow, which we at once determined to stalk, and, if possible, milk. We effected her capture, after a keen chase, and holding on to her horns by turns, tried every process of milking, coaxingly and vigorously, but all in vain, for she refused to acknowledge either of us as her offspring. The result perhaps might have been more satisfactory, had not our only substitutes for milk-pails been the cups attached to our brandy-flasks. I mention this little incident as it is one of the very few occasions on which I ever saw Stephen fairly thwarted.

'From the Engstlen Alp we moved on to the Wengern Alp, and soon after passed over the Jungfrau Joch, the Mönch Joch and the Viescher Joch. Descriptions of the first and last, replete with instances of Stephen's dry and original humour, are given in the "Playground of Europe." We then separated, he starting for the Aletschhorn, I for Monte Rosa.

'A few days later he appeared at the Riffel Hotel where I was, and proposed that I should accompany him on a great expedition, lasting three weeks, to Vienna, in the course of which we were apparently to pass over the intervening mountains as if they were molehills. This I could not do as I had arranged to spend the time in Italy with Liveing. As I was

explaining this to Stephen, a most unfortunate interruption occurred, which put an end to further discussion on the spot. A young lady, one of a party I had promised to convoy to the Zmutt glacier that afternoon, suddenly appeared to ask me some question about the excursion. The instant she had gone he exclaimed, "I see what you prefer, to coming with me over the mountains!" With a look of scorn he turned sharply, rushed down the path towards Zermatt, and I did not see him again till he met us at Vienna. My behaviour was utterly unintelligible to him.' [Four years later and near the self-same spot Stephen himself deserted a climbing comrade in order that he might meet a young lady.]

'But to proceed. His whole demeanour on a mountain was totally different from what any one might have supposed who had seen him speeding along a road in the fens of Cambridgeshire. Whilst on the latter he seemed eager and determined to obtain as much exercise as possible out of his walk. On the Alps he was perfectly calm and free from excitement, never in a hurry, grimly silent on a dangerous spot, daring when necessary, but not unduly rash. His only anxiety was lest his ascent should not be successful. "The game is won," he writes, "when a mountain-top is reached in spite of difficulties; it is lost when one is forced to retreat." Absolutely fearless, he fully recognised the possibility of danger, and did not neglect the rope when his guides considered its use desirable. He was a careful and skilful cragsman, his long reach, both with hands and feet, and wiry limbs being of advantage on difficult rocks, but I was, I think, most impressed by his coolness, self-possession, and firm-footed yet cautious tread, when on a perilous ice-slope. On such occasions he inspired those near him with a feeling of confidence which was distinctly helpful in ascending a slippery line of steps. I speak from experience, as I was immediately behind him on that slope which he has graphically described in his account of the Viescher Joch, on which he says, "there was a bare possibility of our coming down with a run"—the length of which I prefer not to contemplate.

'He had a strong aversion to hearing young climbers boast of their performances on the Alps, and the difficulties and dangers they had surmounted; he well knew how large a share of their success was due to their guides. However, he would make an exception in a case where such bragging was relieved by a vein of humour, as in the case of an American at Zermatt, who marched about with a stock on which were cut the names of all the most difficult peaks and passes. When asked by a friend of Stephen's if he had been up all those mountains, he replied, "No, Sir, I have not, but I gave my guide a guinea for cutting these names, and, I guess, if he has not been up, he is an impostor."

'Stephen always took care to secure thoroughly competent guides on whose judgment he could rely, and whose verdict in a difficulty was final. Had his leading guide expressed an opinion that, owing to indications of bad weather or other cogent reasons, an ascent should be abandoned, my belief is that he would not have argued the question, but would have turned without a murmur, though probably much disappointed. He would never have urged a guide onwards who showed the least unwillingness to proceed.'

Another mountaineer whose testimony will be valued is Mr. Hereford George, sometime editor of the *Alpine Journal*. He writes as follows:

'I made acquaintance with Leslie Stephen in 1800, on my first visit to Switzerland. My companion and I, both fellows of New College, arrived one day at Zermatt, and found there another of our body who had come in by some lofty pass with Stephen. They had met accidentally a little while before, and Stephen had delighted in enlisting a new recruit for mountaineering. Next day Stephen offered to conduct us, with two more Oxford friends, up to the Riffel by the circuitous but very interesting route of the Gorner glacier, which then extended nearly down to Zermatt. For me, and I think for others of the party, it was a totally new experience to go on a glacier, and we were greatly impressed by the way in which Stephen, aided by his favourite guide Melchior Anderegg, set himself to give four total strangers, for none of

us had seen him till the day before, a pleasant introduction to the ice world.

'So far as I remember, I was never with Leslie Stephen on a glacier again, except on the famous first passage of the Jungfrau Joch, which Stephen described in the "Playground of Europe." Of the expedition itself I will say nothing; Stephen's narrative is one of the most brilliant of such papers. But I shall not forget the kindness of his behaviour in relation to it. He arrived at Grindelwald with three friends on purpose to try the Jungfrau Joch, on the same day in July 1862, on which I and a friend arrived from another direction with the same end in view. It was a rare coincidence in those days, when mountaineers were few, that two parties should be bent on the same new expedition; and many men in Stephen's position, as a recognised leader among climbers, would have been annoyed at finding two young upstarts (we had only just joined the Alpine Club) proposing to poach on his domain. My friend and I, with vexation in our hearts, were considering what would be the best substitute for our cherished plan, when Leslie Stephen, quite spontaneously and in the friendliest way, proposed that we should join forces. And this was all the greater kindness because Stephen's party was already quite large enough for an expedition on an unknown glacier, where the difficulties must obviously be serious, and where additional numbers must entail loss of time. Nor would Stephen assume the command. I remember that on the last, and as it proved most difficult, stage of the ascent, he made me take the foremost place among the travellers, because my guide was at that time leading, and it therefore seemed to him right that I should come next on the rope.'

From a speech made to the Alpine Club by Mr. James Bryce after Stephen's death I will with his leave take a passage which tells of Stephen in his second period.[1]

'In 1871 he was at Chamonix, and Mr. (now Sir) Courtenay Ilbert and I had one delightful snow walk in his company and that of his (and our) friend, M. Loppé, up the Glacier du Tour and over the Fenêtre de Saleinaz, returning by the

[1] *Alpine Journal*, xxii. 143.

Glacier of Argentière. We had no guides, and, as Stephen led during half of the way, there were good opportunities for observing his style and method. He was circumspect and cautious, frequently examining his route and cutting his steps with care. Though so swift a walker on level ground that it was hard for others, even fast walkers, to keep up with him, he climbed rather slowly, preserving what is called the regular "guide's pace," probably on the whole the best for long expeditions. His long, lithe, spare frame, light in proportion to the length of his stride, and his arm-reach gave him advantages for climbing, and he was apparently as much at home upon rocks as he was steady upon ice. On the other hand, his height seemed rather to embarrass him in descending, and it was noticeable how deliberately he came down a tolerably steep slope, not running or springing from one rock or hillock to another, as smaller men do. He struck us as being a master of all kinds of mountain craft, except, perhaps, the forecasting of weather, and especially of what may be called "distant weather," the weather of to-morrow afternoon.

'Mr. Dent, who tells me that the guides, Melchior Anderegg and others, to whom he had talked about Stephen, deemed him eminently safe and recognised his mastery of snow craft, thinks that he himself unduly depreciated his own powers, adding that "part of Stephen's pleasure on the mountain-side was to watch and appreciate the skill with which the guides did their share of the work. When at his best he must have had equal endurance to almost any one, and power of endurance means that a man is safe from the beginning to the very end of the climb." As touching snow, I may observe that Stephen, though an excellent rock-climber, loved the snow and ice so much as to care comparatively little for regions where, as in the Eastern Alps, the work is almost all on rocks. He also professed a humorous contempt for volcanoes, however lofty and however long extinct.'

To all this I can add nothing of my own, save that once in Cornwall at the Gurnard's Head I saw a middle-aged gentleman ascending or descending—I forget which it was—a favourite 'chimney.' He became in my eyes a reptile. His

procedure seemed unworthy not only of a philosopher but of a self-respecting mammal, and I refused to follow.

How highly Stephen appreciated the work and the society of good guides is known to all who read his writings. 'The true way to describe all my Alpine ascents is that Michel or Anderegg or Lauener succeeded in performing a feat requiring skill, strength and courage, the difficulty of which was much increased by the difficulty of taking with him his knapsack and his employer.'[1] 'The exquisite pleasure,' says Sir George Trevelyan, 'which was given to many people by the passage about a third-rate guide being superior to a first-rate amateur was very notable. From any one else it would have produced a storm of indignation in some quarters; but coming from Leslie Stephen it was received in Alpine Club circles with silent and respectful depression.' Guides, no doubt, will sometimes flatter their employers; but there was, I take it, much sincerity in what 'Peter Baumann of Grindelwald, a valiant and discreet man,' said to Sir Frederick Pollock: "Ach, der Herr Stephen! Der ist Ein Herr! Er kann Alles und weiss Alles so gut wie ein Führer, und sagt doch nie: Wir sollen hier oder dort gehen, macht keinen Tritt vor einem Führer—das *ist* Ein Herr."[2] About the legitimacy of climbing without guides Stephen would not have dogmatised, and the first ascent of the Cima di Ball was made in solitude; only he would have said that the man who dispenses with a guide deprives himself of one source of enjoyment and interest. In his first season (1858) he had the good fortune to fall in with Melchior Anderegg. Already in 1861 Anderegg visited Stephen in London, and Lady Stephen noted in her diary that she was 'very much pleased with him.' A remark of his about the superiority of a view of London chimney-pots over the view from Mont Blanc is the starting-point of a delightful pair of essays in the history of æsthetics.[3] 'Le grand Melchior' was in England again in 1888. ('Je l'ai fait voir Westminster Abbey et Mme. Tussaud. Il disait qu'il n'avait jamais vu aucune chose aussi

[1] 'Playground,' p. 76. [2] *Independent Review*, iii. 52 (June 1904).
[3] 'The Old School,' and 'The New School,' in the 'Playground,' pp. 1, 36.

belle que Mme. Tussaud.') The friendship never cooled. Whenever after 1876 Stephen goes to the Alps, the two men whom he hopes to meet are M. Loppé, the painter, and Melchior Anderegg, the guide. That in past times Melchior had amused as well as aided him appears from one of Dr. Morgan's stories. 'Stephen asked Anderegg how he managed to get a lady, under his care, over crevasses. "Well," was the reply, "I first go myself; then I pull a piece of sugar-candy out of my pocket; I hold it towards her, and say, 'Come, come, come!' and over she comes at once."' But I must not attempt to do what only Stephen could have done: to praise with discriminating but affectionate words his trusty companion.

Readers of Stephen's essays will not have forgotten 'A Bad Five Minutes in the Alps.'[1] Whether he ever wrote anything more powerful, or in a large sense of the word more true to life, than the account of his thoughts and feelings when he was hypothetically facing speedy death, seems open to question. He denied in a foot-note that there was any foundation of fact for his fiction. Nevertheless, a little about its origin has been told me by Sir George Trevelyan. 'In 1872 I was at Zermatt with Lord John Hervey—neither of us being professional climbers. One afternoon Hervey and I walked up the Trift Ravine with Stephen. All of a sudden he left the path and went up the rocks at the side, walking up hill exactly as any one else walks on the plain ground. Very soon it seemed to us that we were in difficulties; but I am glad to remember that we followed him docilely without remonstrance, and, after an hour or so, we got into the path again. Some time afterwards his delightful "Bad Five Minutes"—perhaps the most readable bit of theological controversy in existence—appeared; and then I asked him whether the idea had been suggested by our afternoon in the Trift Ravine; he said that it had; and that was the beginning and end of my common experience with him in that mountain climbing in which he was pre-eminent among mankind. Any clear and definite reminiscence of him is treasured by all who

[1] 'Free-thinking and Plain-speaking,' p. 155.

remember him; for a higher, purer, sweeter nature was not among us.'[1] It is not unlikely that Stephen could remember more than one 'bad five minutes.' He told Mr. Bryce 'that never had he found himself in so dangerous a position as when, having one day gone out alone for a mere afternoon ramble, he became entangled, in trying to make a short cut, among precipices which, though not lofty, were quite lofty enough to make a slip fatal.'[2] Concerning his worst moment in the Alps he was very reticent; but a comrade slipped, and a whole party was soon descending an ice slope towards a bergschrund at a far too rapid rate.

The solitary 'ramble' became in course of time almost as attractive to him as the grand expedition, though whether 'ramble' be just the right word to indicate the form of exercise to which he would devote 'a bye-day in the Alps,' seems disputable. To walk and walk until he ceased to think, or until thought and feeling became indistinguishable,was, he explained, one object of these excursions. 'Some people, I am aware, think while they walk, and I have known of a case in which a newspaper leader was composed during an ascent of the Jungfrau.'[3] The case in question was that of a stalwart companion, who talked *Saturday Review* while incidentally he raised his massive body through the requisite thousands of feet. Leslie admired and often mentioned this display of bodily and mental vigour, but did not regard it as a good example for mountaineers. A strict attention to the business in hand would have pleased him better. He was himself a silent climber. Some who climbed with him thought him a gloomy companion, and others, who knew him better, were surprised that one who could write so well of the glory and mystery of the mountains should be so slow of speech when he was among them. Stephen could not 'gush,' and to 'gush' over the mountains would have seemed to him

[1] The 'Bad Five Minutes,' was published in *Fraser*, Nov. 1872, and this date accords well with what Sir George Trevelyan says.

[2] *Alpine Journal*, xxii. 145.

[3] 'A Bye-Day in the Alps,' *Cornhill*, June 1874. Stephen regretted that he had not included this paper in the 'Playground.' It ought to be there.

an act of profanity. They deserved critical appreciation, and not the first word that comes to the tongue. But a few sentences written by one who could thoroughly sympathise with his silent adoration will best say what at this point has to be said. M. Loppé has described for me an ascent of the Titlis that he made in January 1879 with Leslie and another companion. 'Tout vibrait à nos yeux tant notre émotion était profonde. Le calme parfait de l'atmosphère, l'air vivifiant que nous respirions, la sérénité d'un ciel pur, d'un bleu fin et intense enveloppant les immensités lointaines, ces suites de chaînes de montagnes s'étendant vers l'infini, en haut le soleil dont l'éclatante lumière harmonisait cet ensemble de monts, de vallées, de plaines revêtues de leur parure d'hiver, ce spectacle merveilleux nous pénétrait d'un respect et d'un recueillement profond. Stephen, silencieux, remuait à peine les lèvres pour dire à son neveu le nom de quelques unes de ces grandes cimes qui font l'orgueil de la Suisse. Trois-quarts d'heure furent bien vite écoulés, il fallut partir ; chacun reprit son piolet, et nous descendîmes en silence, en nous efforçant de retenir le plus longtemps possible cette vision du beau absolu que le Titlis venait de nous dévoiler dans tout son charme et toute sa grandeur.'

Nevertheless, during his first seasons in the Alps one of the chief delights that Stephen found in mountaineering lay in the opportunity for making friends. Naturally shy and reserved, he could expand among fellow devotees when a hard day's work was done and the pipes were lighted. And the process of expansion was pleasant: so pleasant that humorous apologies were offered for some of its results. 'To say the truth, our party of that summer [1862] was only too apt to break out into undignified explosions of animal spirits, bordering at times upon horse-play. I can imagine that a sentimental worshipper of the beauties of nature would have been rather shocked at the execrable jokes which excited our laughter in the grandest scenery, and would have better become schoolboys than respectable college authorities.'[1]

[1] 'Playground,' p. 149.

It may have been noticed that Stephen climbed with many different men: he climbed, I think, with most of 'the old masters.' I fancy that at a later time some people would have questioned his clubbability (he questioned it himself)—especially after a great sorrow had fallen upon him—but of his 'Alpine-Clubbability' there never can have been any doubt whatever. The ice-axe breaks more kinds of ice than one, and that in Stephen's eyes was not the least of its merits. 'The frequent speeches that he made during thirty years at the annual dinners of the Club became celebrated.' So says Mr. Douglas Freshfield, and others have said the like. 'Their heartiness, their sudden and unexpected transitions from sentiment to humour never failed to delight the listeners. Given a sympathetic audience, Stephen was one of the best after-dinner speakers of his time.'[1] He had not often to complain, I should suppose, that a sympathetic audience was not given, though it is said that a jocose outburst against those who carry scientific instruments with them in their climbs was taken too seriously by an eminent man of science.[2] Mr. Bryce has spoken of 'the atmosphere of geniality and kindness' that Stephen brought with him to the meetings and dinners of the Club Mr. George, carrying back his memory to the sixties, speaks of Stephen's as 'the dominant personality' in a little 'Alpine Dining Company,' which was an off-shoot or satellite of the larger body. Stephen had found an element in which he could expand, in which he could be happy. At the beginning of 1874 he wrote thus to M. Loppé, in whose company he had recently traversed the Col des Hirondelles: 'Quant à l'Alpine Club, nous avons eu un grand dîner. . . . J'ai lu une description d'un certain passage dans la chaîne de Mt. Blanc qui a fait frémir tout le club. C'était d'une éloquence admirable, mais pas trop magnifique pour le passage.' It was not often that even in the way of jest Stephen praised what he had written. However, in 1895 he said in sober earnest that 'The Sunset from Mont Blanc' was the

[1] *The Author*, April 1, 1904.

[2] 'Some Early Impressions,' *National Review*, Dec. 1903, p. 580. Mr. Frederic Harrison has told the story in the *Cornhill*, April 1904, p. 436.

best thing that he ever wrote. Of 'The Alps in Winter' I do not think that he would willingly have spoken to any one.

That he began to write for the public was largely due to his visits to Switzerland. Along with the mountain fever a desire for its propagation possessed him. I take this entry from his mother's diary: '*Jan.* 26, 1860. We all went to Clapham [Shades of the Sect!] to hear Leslie's lecture on the Alps: most interesting—capitally delivered—everybody delighted with it: his photographs and [his sister's] large drawings hung up, making a most beautiful exhibition.' Something may be read of similar lectures at such different places as Cookham Deane, Trinity Hall, and the Working Men's College. Then in 1861 a mediocre German book—I borrow the epithet from Mr. Freshfield—was translated.[1] Then an account of an ascent of the Allalinhorn was contributed to 'Vacation Tourists,' edited by Mr. Galton in 1861; and accounts of an ascent of the Schreckhorn and the passage of the Eiger Joch were contributed to the second volume of 'Peaks, Passes and Glaciers,' which was published in 1862. Good judges assert that Stephen's papers mark an era in the history of mountaineering literature. 'He originated a new way of treating the Alps, and a way by which all who followed him have been more or less consciously influenced,' so says Mr. Bryce. 'He set a note which has been followed ever since,' so says Mr. Freshfield. 'His first accounts of mountain climbs became the model for more descriptions of a similar nature than subsequent writers probably are aware of,' so says Mr. Clinton Dent. And he adds this: 'Stephen wrote these articles obviously without effort and evidently for the sheer pleasure of experiencing again, as his pen travelled over the paper, the delights of a pursuit which was to him in the truest sense of the word a pure recreation.' But, be all this as it may, these papers mark an era in Stephen's own history. It may seem strange, but I believe it true that in and about the year 1860 Stephen did not know that he could write, and

[1] H. Berlepsch: 'The Alps; or, Sketches of Life and Nature in the Mountains.'

only began to suspect that he could write as he was in the act of writing about a beloved pursuit.[1]

To collect what has been said of his books is in general no part of my task; still the number of persons competent to estimate all the merits of the 'Playground' cannot be very large, since one indispensable qualification for the critics of it must be that often and long they have gazed upon the mountains from what Stephen held to be the right point of view, namely, the highest that is accessible. Therefore a little more of what Mr. Dent has been good enough to write to me will here be given. 'The chapters that made the book immediately and permanently popular were not mere records of expeditions. In 'The Old School,' 'The New School,' and 'The Regrets of a Mountaineer,' Stephen struck a new and hitherto unworked vein and really exhausted all the ore. There is little that has been written since (and an infinite amount of Alpine writing has been turned out) of which at least the germs of suggestion cannot be traced to these papers. They were more like good talk in a library than essays hammered out at the study table. Absolutely natural, unaffected and straightforward, they had the charm of showing a deep thinker in his moods of deepest enjoyment.' Two of the essays mentioned by Mr. Dent, those in which Stephen traced the transition from a fashionable horror of mountains to a fashionable worship of mountains were learned performances, possible only to one who was a voracious reader as well as an excellent climber.[2] A few more words may be added: 'He pictured,' writes Mr. Freshfield, 'the splendours of the snows, or the unearthly grandeur of a sunset seen from the summit of Mont Blanc in pages which combine accuracy of observation with enthusiastic appreciation and sentiment. At a later date he became one of the discoverers of that enchanting

[1] Stephen edited the *Alpine Journal* for 1868–71 and part of 1872, his predecessor being Mr. George and his successor Mr. Freshfield. From some letters to Mr. Whymper I gather that there were moments when it almost perished for want of contributions. 'This, I really think, will be uncommonly near the last number of the Magazine. I must review you at great length unless some unexpected windfall comes at the last moment.' (April 14, 1871.)

[2] They appeared as 'The Alps in the Last Century,' in *Fraser*, Aug. 1870.

Dreamland, the Alps in Winter. The chapter which bears that title is the most emotional and eloquent he ever wrote. Some of its descriptive passages have hardly been surpassed by any lover of mountains, even by Ruskin.' 'It was indeed a liberal education,' says Mr. Frederic Harrison, 'to a young Alpine climber to spend a few days with Leslie Stephen and his Oberlanders in the crags and the snow-fields which he loved, as if they were his native home—as if they were the Delectable Mountains where the Pilgrim might at last find blessedness and rest. The Alps were to Stephen the elixir of life, a revelation, a religion. And we may rank his enthusiasm for nature, and his familiarity with grand scenery as among the best influences of our time in teaching us the moral and spiritual force which nature can impress on the soul of man.'[1] And now a word from Mr. Bryce: 'He combined an intense delight in the freedom and variety and grandeur of the Alps with a no less vivid interest in mankind. He was a student of human nature, if not of inanimate nature, and there runs through all his narratives or descriptions a vein of feeling which gives them their peculiar charm. He had a kind of dry, grave humour, which came in sudden flashes when least expected, and he had also a poetical appreciation of the sublimity and solemnity of high mountains which it would be hard to find expressed with equal force and depth in any other writer. . . . Sometimes one feels that Stephen was not only a thinker but also a poet; I will not say a poet without the gift of verse, but rather a man penetrated with so high a sense of what poetry may be that he will not venture into verse lest he should be unable to rise to the standard which verse ought to maintain when employed upon the noblest aspects of nature. Let it be added that his feeling, when he allows it to find expression—for he was generally restrained and reserved in his writings—is always simple and true. He is never affected. He never poses. He never seems to be trying to soar. He says exactly what he feels and says it because he feels it.'[2]

All this seems to me very true. I have been just high

[1] *Cornhill*, April 1904, p. 438.

[2] *Alpine Journal*, xxii. p. 145.

enough to allow myself that guess. Only when it is said that Stephen worshipped the Alps, that they became his religion and so forth, I feel impelled to risk the remark that his love of scenery was not very pure. How far any human being's love of mountain, sky and sea is pure of all implicit memories of other human beings is, I imagine, a difficult question, and I must leave it to the professors of æsthetics. Only, intense as was Stephen's love for the mountains, I should not place it high in the scale of purity. No favourite poem had he more completely appropriated and assimilated than certain 'Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey.' The mountains speak to me, so he says, 'in tones at once more tender and more awe-inspiring than that of any mortal teacher. The loftiest and sweetest strains of Milton and Wordsworth may be more articulate, but do not lay so forcible a grasp upon my imagination.' Yes, but why? 'There, as after a hot summer day the rocks radiate back their stores of heat, every peak and forest seems to be still redolent with the most fragrant perfume of memory. . . . They retain whatever of high and tender and pure emotion may have once been associated with them.'[1] The Alps, it may be, became Stephen's 'cathedral'; but nobody worships a cathedral.

About this matter one other word will be said hereafter. What at this moment should be noticed is that the man whose writings were thus to be praised by literate mountaineers was slow to believe that he could write, even about the Alps, and in 1861 translated a 'mediocre' German book.[2]

[1] 'Playground,' pp. 280, 281.

[2] In Mr. Whymper's famous 'Scrambles' and also in his 'Guide to Chamonix' may be seen a head of Stephen, drawn by Mr. Whymper from a photograph. 'The portrait,' Stephen wrote in 1870, 'gives great satisfaction to a lady who should be the best judge.' Besides those of Stephen's friends who are mentioned in the text, I desire to thank Mr. A. V. Valentine Richards for some guidance in Alpine matters.

VII

THE 'TIMES' AND THE WAR

(1863–1865)

The Stephen who ran along the river bank exhorting the college boat and strode from peak to peak 'like a pair of compasses' was also a keen politician: that is to say, he was deeply interested in current politics, had a definite creed of his own, and loved a prolonged argument. His political opinions might, I take it, be briefly described as those of a young radical who did homage to Mill and Bright. A little more might be said; but I do not know that his articles of belief were of a specially interesting because highly personal kind. It seems to me possible that he was led to think himself somewhat more of a politician than he really was by his friendship with Henry Fawcett. That friendship he celebrated in one of his most widely read books, and what is in that book I do not propose to repeat. Only it should be remembered that the bond which was already uniting him to his friend was drawn much closer by the grievous misadventure which deprived Fawcett of his eye-sight (September 17, 1858). I am told that when that blow had fallen, and Fawcett had returned to Cambridge, Stephen's tender care for him was beautiful to see. Men said it was almost womanly. When, therefore, early in 1863, Fawcett stands unsuccessfully for the borough of Cambridge, we need not be surprised, though some people were surprised, to see Stephen haranguing a Radical crowd from the window of an inn, and 'properly exciting' his audience. 'Stephen was a model friend, he was of the same principles as Fawcett in the broad, and he bounded over all minor difficulties'; so says one who knew both men well.

In the next year Fawcett went to Brighton to fight for a vacant seat. Some of his Cambridge friends accompanied him and exerted themselves on his behalf. After a little experience of their methods of electioneering, a professional agent said to them : 'You gents are not like other people. You would like to know what the Brighton people really think of you. They think you are the rummiest lot as ever came to Brighton.' Stephen had joined this 'rummy lot.' A little 'campaign newspaper' was to be published, and he had been summoned by telegram. A set of the *Brighton Election Reporter* has been presented by Mrs. Fawcett to the British Museum. It consists of six numbers.[1] I am told that the whole of it, except the first number and a few casual contributions, was written by Stephen. 'He worked at it day and night.' The paper was priced at a halfpenny and given to the newsboys for nothing. 'The small press' that had been sent down from London 'could not satisfy the demand, while Stephen supplied new editions every few hours.' It was a remarkable feat, for, to the best of my knowledge, he had not as yet had any practice in journalism.

An anecdote must follow. I would not paint Stephen other than he was, and must admit that, as Aubrey said of Hobbes, 'he would sometimes swear by way of emphasis.' I will only remark that at this moment, though he had not resigned, and could not resign, his orders, he had declined any longer to perform divine service, and might consider himself to be a 'parson' against his will. On the day of the election—there was open voting then—the excitement in Fawcett's committee-room grew intense as it became always more probable that he would be defeated owing to the persistence of another liberal candidate. 'The language became loud ; the "chairman of the room" one X, not a tall man, scattered his big D's about freely. Stephen entered ; he had lost himself, and his language was such that it sobered X, who crept up to him, took his left arm in both hands and said : "Oh, Mr. Stephen, don't take on so ; the General Election will come in a year, when we shall want a second candidate to run with Fawcett, and we have made up

[1] Dated on Feb. 10, 11, 12, 13, 15 and 25.

our minds that you are the man we should like." Stephen tore his left arm so roughly away that he nearly threw X on the ground, while he shouted [something about X's soul, and then] "Don't you know that I'm a parson?"'

But if some part of the 'fanatical enthusiasm' which issued in this explosion was due to the excitement of battle, and other part was due to a chivalrous friendship, there was one political question which at this moment set all Stephen's nerves on edge. He touched it in the *Election Reporter:* 'the possibility of our being forced into an unnatural war with men of our own blood and of our own language.' 'It would be a war in which we should be undeniably fighting by the side of slave-holders and helping to destroy a form of government under which (with all its faults) millions of our kindred have lived in unparalleled prosperity for over eighty years.'

These words strike the key-note of an important episode in Stephen's life. Indeed, as we shall see hereafter, it is more than an episode. We need not inquire how far his action was determined by that conviction of the hatefulness of slavery which was hereditary among the Stephens, and how far by the teaching of his new masters, such as Mill and Cairnes. It must suffice that he became a vehement champion of the North at a time when among the richer classes in England there was, to say the least, much sympathy with the South. He afterwards explained in an American paper that there had been no love of slavery in England, but that there had been an intense dread of democracy, and a strong wish to see the failure of the great democratic experiment; and that, I take it, is nowadays the generally received explanation. At Cambridge he was not alone, and no cause could be called disreputable if it had the Master of Trinity among its supporters;[1] but still the Southerners had a large majority in the combination rooms. Stephen would argue for hours about this matter, and I infer that he did not always keep his temper. Sir Robert Romer is 'sorry to be obliged to confess' that some of Stephen's undergraduate friends would occasionally advocate the cause of the Confederates, less from a conviction of its justice than

[1] *See* Stephen's Life of Whewell in 'Dict. Nat. Biog.,' lx. 459.

from a desire to call forth one of those bursts of 'burning eloquence' in which he 'denounced their folly and ignorance.'

In the summer of 1863 Stephen went to America. He was going to see for himself how matters stood, and to collect powder and shot for use in England. The motives that urged him were, I believe, purely political and controversial. For mere travel, as distinguished from tramping and mountaineering, he had no taste, and on this occasion he was turning aside from a playground which could still offer the 'inaccessible' Matterhorn. Nor have I any reason to suppose that he then knew much or cared much about American literature. He had not then read a word of Emerson: this we know from his own confession.[1] He had read the 'Biglow Papers,' and, no doubt, he could repeat a great part of them; but he had not any notion that he was going to make acquaintance with American men of letters, still less that some of them were to be his most intimate friends. He had a few letters of introduction—his cousin, Mr. Edward Dicey, had lately been in the United States—he found that 'Stephen' was no bad name to carry among men who were fighting against slave-owners, and that American lawyers had a mighty reverence for 'Stephen on Pleading'; but on the whole he seems to have gone forth trusting to his luck. Something of interest he would see and hear.

He was a good son and a good friend, and he sent home to Lady Stephen a series of very long letters, which, when she had read them, were to be forwarded to Fawcett. They are bright, entertaining letters: excellent specimens, I should say, of Sir Leslie's first style. I will give some extracts, remembering, however, that the writer, rather than the things written about, is at the present moment the point of interest. The longest passages will be from the earliest letters, for these show the beginnings of some important friendships.[2] As regards the historical background it will be enough to say that we are now in the third year of the great war and that while Stephen is at sea Lee is invading Pennsylvania.

[1] 'Studies of a Biographer,' vol. iv. p. 130.

[2] The extant copy of these letters looks as if it had been made by a clerk to whom they were dictated. There are many faults in it.

TREMONT HOUSE, BOSTON,
[*July* 12, 1863.]

MY DEAR MOTHER,

I wrote to you last from a fog in the Atlantic 'among the sharks and whales,' as the poet beautifully observes. We got to Halifax, N.S., on a Tuesday morning about 8, and after breakfast I strolled out to inspect the place. . . . It was, in fact, so hot that I was glad to retire to the steamer and study the papers. Our Yankee fellow passengers were rejoiced here by the news of Lee's repulse by Meade and retreat upon the Potomac.[1] This gave additional pride to their insulting remarks about this very unpromising specimen of the British dominions, which seems to be inhabited by about three frost-bitten natives of mild appearance to every two drunken sailors, one half-naked nigger and one English soldier. . . . From Halifax we had thick fog to Boston. I was awaked by feeling the steamboat stop on entering the harbour at 5 on Thursday morning [July 9] in a steady rain. Since then I have been steadily occupied in taking in first impressions of Yankee-land, which are very lively and amusing. It already begins to feel more familiar, and I suppose I shall not often take in so much novelty in any future three days. So I will tell you what the state of my mind is at present, and you will see how I have been getting on without any exact journal. [Description of Boston and of the hotel.] Now as to the people. . . . The first thing that struck me was their extremely foreign appearance. I don't mean that they looked like Frenchmen or any inferior foreigners, but they looked most intensely Yankee. They all looked sallow and thin. I don't see how they can help it if they have much of the sultry weather we are getting just now. They wear the regulation beards and straw hats that you see in *Punch*, and I said to myself at almost every man I met, 'No one could mistake you for anything but a pure Yankee,' . . . and, though I now see a good many men whom I should not know from Englishmen, I have still

[1] Battle of Gettysburg, July 3, 1863. Lee recrossed the Potomac on the night of July 13.

hardly seen one fat or fresh-coloured individual, and I feel myself almost fat among these lean creatures. 'Come to talk to them,' as the man says in the 'Biglow Papers,' 'they a'nt so different from what we be.' All that I have had occasion to speak to have been very civil and obliging. The great subject here is, of course, the war. As we came into harbour here, the first thing we heard of was the fall of Vicksburg.[1] The same afternoon I heard a salute of 100 guns fired on the Common. . . . The newspapers are cram-full of the war to the exclusion of everything else. I never hear people talking in the inn or in the streets without catching some words about the war, and every one that I have talked to is full of it. The first night I was here I went to a public meeting where speeches were being made about a plan for providing for the families of the nigger regiments that are now being raised, by setting them to work on a certain island. A flag was exhibited with an ingenious device, [Liberty][2] trampling on a copperhead snake, 'copperheads' being the present slang for southern sympathisers. The goddess of Liberty is, of course, a bit of Yankeeism, but there is something that is rather interesting about a real flag that is going into a real battle—at least to an English volunteer. The eloquence at the said meeting was rather amusing. An army chaplain, a fine-looking fellow, talked about the poor negro looking down at his blue pants and counting the glittering buttons on his coat—each button with the American eagle on it—and feeling a new manhood glowing through all his nerves. I have seen a good number of Federal soldiers in the said blue pants, which is a quiet, business-like kind of uniform, many of them wounded. I have also seen some fine-looking nigger soldiers, and am told that a nigger regiment left this place the other day amidst tremendous enthusiasm—which is remarkable, if true. Other remembrances of the war turn up everywhere. My Alpine friend, Stone, whom I much wished to see, had gone off to Gettysburg to bring back his brother's body. I met Holmes [Oliver Wendell the elder], a rather

[1] July 4, 1863. [2] Omitted word.

well-known literary gent, yesterday, and he told us of his son [Oliver Wendell the younger], who had been shot once through the breast and once through the neck and gone back to duty each time, and was now just recovering from a third wound in the heel.[1] From all I can hear and see, there never was a more atrocious lie than the common one of the *Times* about these people [not][2] fighting themselves and getting Germans and Irish to fight for them. You can't speak about any one without hearing about his, or his relatives' losses. The conscription is going on here now, *i.e.*, the first drawing for it, and seems to take a very large proportion of the available population. However, all the papers and all the people speak with the most perfect confidence of the approaching collapse of the rebellion, and I must say that, unless Lee gains some great success, they appear to me to be right. . . .

I have been about to various sights, of most of which it is not worth while to make mention, a 'sight' being in a general way a thing not to be seen, much less heard of. [The Public Library is praised.] Another thing to which I went was the speech-day of a Latin School here. It was much like such things in England. It began with an examination, for which the boys seemed to have been wonderfully crammed and to know any amount of things by heart. [They] declaimed a variety of Greek and Latin and English pieces with an amount of gesticulation and bellowing that you could not have got out of a whole school of English boys, and some of which the Yankee audience seemed to think was a trifle too much, even when employed to adorn the sentiment of spurrning the rrecrreant rrrebels, &c. After this, having discovered that I was a distinguished stranger, the President asked me to say a few words, which I need hardly say I did amidst loud applause, and which procured me two or three other invitations to different places. . . .

[1] *See* 'My Hunt after the Captain' in 'Pages from an Old Volume of Life.' It will hardly be necessary to add that 'the Captain' is now a judge of the Supreme Court of the United States. [2] Omitted word.

I have been out some time, and coming back I find a pressing invitation from one Mrs. Weston, whose name I never heard of before, to go down and stay with 'us,' whoever 'us' is, at some place I never heard of—on the strength of 'a letter from Dicey,' by whose request, it seems, I am to meet 'some of the leading abolitionists!' Also [I find] cards from one J. S. Field (of whom I never heard) and from Lowell of the 'Biglow Papers.' So it seems I am falling on my feet. I shall very likely stay a few days longer than I intended. . . .

I have been to two churches in a promiscuous way to-day —one unitarian, the other mild congregational or dissenting. They were very much alike—especially the unitarian: rather in the cold morality or Christianity with the chill off style. We sat in comfortable pews, fanning ourselves—it is frightfully hot and muggy—with fans regularly supplied in all the pews, and listened to the gospels, prayers, &c., with great apparent languidness and indifference. Perhaps the heat of the weather and the [fact] of most people being out of Boston made a difference. Still, though the praying part was bad, the sermons, if less religious, were less palpably rubbish than most English ditto. However, I mean to go through a course of American theology. Remember to send this to Fawcett. I hope that M. is coming out strong in the sketching line this summer.—Your affectionate son, L.S.

Boston,
Tuesday, July 21 [1863].

I did not write my Sunday letter, first for reasons which will presently appear, secondly because the mail only goes out to-morrow. . . . I sit down to it [at] the first moment that I have been able to take my ease in my inn. I shall treat you to a bit of American politics (chiefly for Fawcett's benefit) before going into private details further than to say that, as people put it here, I have been having a right 'good time.'

First of all, I think that it is all up with Secesh. [Reasons given at length.] Moreover, every paper that I see here and every word that I hear convinces me that the North

have made up their minds to 'put it through,' as they say. There is wonderfully little apparent exasperation against the South. They seem to be as proud of Southern pluck as they are of their own. But they all say that they have made up their minds to win, and that they have never had any doubt about winning. The only question is, I fully believe, a question of time. . . . That emancipation must ultimately be the end of the war is becoming more and more certain. . . . How inexpressibly childish Spence's 'protection and free trade theory' seems now, I need hardly say.[1] Here is a neat fact for old Fawcett to throw at any of the Spence school, as showing the progress of emancipation in the North. [Enthusiastic reception of negro regiments marching through Boston.] If Fawcett wants a telling story [for] a speech, the colonel of the first of these regiments asked his mother whether she would object to his going—Jeff. having threatened to hang every white officer of niggers. She replied that she should be prouder of his commanding such a regiment than of his being shot in battle—whereupon he went.

It matters very little what people mean now or what they meant when they began. In a war like this when you have established a raw, you must rub it, and Secesh's raw is slavery. . . . The North are destroying slavery, not because they are abolitionists, but because the South depends on slavery. That seems to me as plain as two and two makes four. . . .

Well, I now come to my own private adventures. My week has been about as follows. I have been three days over to Cambridge to see various university celebrations, corresponding to our 'Commencement.' I have been staying with certain Miss Westons, friends of the Diceys, and two days with Lowell.

As to the Cambridge people, including Lowell, Holmes, Dana and others, they are really very pleasant, well educated

[1] Mr. James Spence, of Liverpool, was a prominent champion of the South. *See* his book 'The American Union,' of which a fourth edition was published in 1862.

men, like the best class of [our] Cambridge men. I say the best class, as they are all men of some literary name in a small way, which is more than I can say for any Cambridge don ; and they seem to be really inclined to work, which is still less like our place. Otherwise they are so much like Englishmen that I really cannot see the difference, and all very fond of talking about English manners and customs and celebrities in a very pleasant spirit. Lowell, as you might expect from the 'Biglow Papers,' is something more. He really is one of the very pleasantest men I ever met. He asked me to stay over Sunday with him, and we got so very thick together that I did not leave him till this morning after two most pleasant days. He has, as you may suppose, a great deal of fun (especially in telling a Yankee story), and is also, what I like, a thoroughly patriotic Yankee ; and there is no humbug about him any way. The other men are not quite up to him, but have all been almost absurdly kind and hospitable. Of course I had to make a speech at the Commencement Dinner, which I attended, and I presume I made it well, as it was applauded and complimented to a satisfactory extent. It was, of course, to the effect that there were only about six men in England who yet understood this war (including J. S. Mill and myself), *i.e.*, amongst highly intelligent men ;[1] but that we all should understand them if they used their victory to good ends (emancipation tacitly meant) and that they would find it out. . . . [On another occasion I was introduced] to the two abolition leaders, Garrison and Wendell Philips. Garrison was dragged by a rope through the streets of Boston twenty years ago for preaching abolition and was only saved by the police with great difficulty. It is impossible not to feel some respect for a man who has been dragged through the streets by a rope. Moreover, as he is considered to be a thoroughgoing fanatic, I was rather pleased by the calmness with which he talked about the South and his enemies generally. Moreover, he was very reasonable about England, where he had known Wilberforce and others, including uncle [Sir]

[1] Need the editor remark that 'of course' Stephen did not say this ?

George [Stephen]. However, a philanthropist always shows the [cloven][1] hoof somewhere, and I found that his weak point was non-resistance, a doctrine which sounds about as sensible from an abolitionist now as if a man should pull the trigger of a rifle and advise the cap not to explode. So I put him down as deficient in sense and rather less cultivated or intelligent than my Cambridge [Mass.] friends. Wendell Philips, who, Dicey says, is a great orator, I did not hear speak. He struck me as being of about the same mental power, but he has very pleasant quiet manners and went out of his way to be civil to me. These abolitionists are of course in great glory now, as no doubt they have been substantially right in most of their prophesyings. One can't help respecting men who took up such an unpopular cause with such pluck, but they did not impress me as being of great ability. . . .

Lowell's house was built by an English governor of the colony. He keeps a cow, a pig, and fowls, &c., and has some grounds with fine old trees which would be made really beautiful in England. [But] labour is so dear that they don't get their gardening properly done, and the grounds have a tendency to look slovenly. . . . [It] reminds one of quiet English country life, which in fact it very much resembles, with the exception that you never see any signs of poverty. . . . I know you will think I have spoken too favourably of my friends over here. I am, of course, in the best and most English part of the country. Perhaps I shall find things worse as I go on. However, so far as I have gone, I have never met a pleasanter set of people in so short a time. . . .

New York,
Sunday, July 26 [1863].

. . . I am going on very well, although I presume that I shall hardly find any place so pleasant as Boston, and especially Lowell and his friends. . . . I went round and saw two or three of my friends before leaving: amongst others O. W. Holmes, author of 'Elsie Venner,' the story

[1] 'cleaver' MS.

about a young woman who was half rattlesnake, which I rather think that you read and groaned over. He is a very jolly, chirpy little man, whose principal fault is that when he has once got started in talking, I doubt if even Fawcett could get a word in. He has a son with him, a captain in the army, just recovering from a bad wound in the heel. The said captain exhibited to me the scar of a bullet which had struck him just over the heart, glanced on a rib and gone just under the skin right round his breast and come out at the other side. . . .

Leaving Boston, I went, I don't exactly know why, to a place called Newport in Rhode Island, which is one of the most popular watering-places round about. Why it should be popular is more than I can say, as it is hatefully flat and apparently devoid even of good bathing. However, I could not stay in it long, for I felt that disgust arising which always comes to me at Interlaken or any of those vile haunts of all that is most contemptible in humanity, called watering-places. The amusements, as far as I could see, consisted in sitting on a verandah listening to a band of music, the men smoking. Afterwards, I presume, they went out for drives or rows or something; but I could not stay to see any more of it, and started by the first boat to New York. . . .

New York is an undeniably fine town [where, however, they have been having serious riots which were not suppressed with sufficient vigour to please the writer. 'Some good volleys got the brutes under, but there should have been a real good massacre.'[1]] Everything is perfectly quiet now, and the niggers all about the streets. My friends here were certain sugar-refiners, as great swells here as old X a-coining gold down in Whitechapel. The elder brother took me over his house, which is a scrumptious palace. He showed me his bath and his wife's bath and his friends' baths and his butler's bath and his dodge of every conceivable description and his marble floors and rose-

[1] 'Draft Riots' in New York, July 13–16, 1863: Rhodes, 'Hist. U.S.,' vol. iv. p. 321.

wood staircases and English lawn with such heartfelt satisfaction that I was reminded of our venerable custos [Dr. Geldart, Master of Trinity Hall]. He was a sensible kind of fellow, but decidedly in the merchant prince line, who can buy up ten of your bloated aristocrats. . . . My other friend was Grant White, a very pleasant man of a literary turn, who has somehow helped W. [G. Clark][1] with his Shakespeare. I sat with him and his wife a long time and got very friendly. He had been a pro-slavery (or at least not an anti-slavery) democrat, but now, he said, he was an abolitionist, a sentiment which I have already heard from many people here, and which, I need not say, I respect. He was also very enthusiastic about England and the English—another recommendation which I fancy is common amongst educated people here—and I had to go over the old story, with which I am getting painfully familiar, of English Southern proclivities and their cause. *À propos*, I wish Fawcett would send me all the gossip he knows, and also any scandal he knows about Roebuck. It is useful here. I shall see White to-morrow again, and shall probably start up the Hudson on Tuesday. . . .

I will now give Stephen's itinerary and then some further extracts which may illustrate certain points in his character and some of his tastes and opinions. To be brief, after a few days at New York, he found hospitality in 'a Yankee country house,' that of Mr. Pell, at West Point. Thence he went to Albany, Utica, Trenton Falls, Niagara, Buffalo, Chicago. Striking the Mississippi, he went up by boat to St. Paul and then down, partly by boat and partly by railroad, to St. Louis. Abandoning a project of seeing Vicksburg, and even New Orleans, he struck eastward by Cincinnati to Philadelphia. Then he visited Washington and the President. Then he had a few days with Meade's army on the Rappahannock and returned to Washington. Here his letters cease; but short-hand notes show that he revisited Boston and stayed for a full week with Lowell. Some of those notes are of interest.

[1] A blank.

Sat. 3 *Oct.* In the evening went to Lowell's, who was as hospitable and pleasant as usual. I have not yet met with any one who talks with so much sense about things. He is apt to be a little perverse in the views he takes of affairs just out of perversity. . . . *Sund.* 4 *Oct.* Pipes, Pipes, Pipes! Lowell's view of the English and American question [not wholly decipherable]. To all sentimentality he has a healthy dislike, and this line of argument, though eccentric, is what I sympathise with. . . . 6 *Oct.* Norton a very pleasant man. . . . N. discussed certain points of religion with me. . . . *Wed.* 7 *Oct.* Saw Longfellow, who was a pleasant, white-bearded, benevolent-looking man of very quiet manners, who talked agreeably, but not poetically (?) with a want of [the ?] readiness (?) which appears to be characteristic of the literary gent in these parts. . . . *Thurs.* Lowell lectured, but would not let me go to hear him, to my great disgust. I am told he is very good. . . . *Sat.* Went over with Lowell to Concord. Saw Emerson and Hawthorne. Emerson did not impress me with the idea of any particular power. He is a calm, quiet, gentlemanlike man, very unaffected and talking a great deal about England. We did not, however, have any really good conversation, which was perhaps partly my fault and partly his. His opinion of Mat. Arnold surprised me and I chaffed (?) Lowell about it next day. Lowell was not much of a believer, but I find that all people here look upon Arnold with great admiration. . . . *Monday* [*Oct.* 12]. Left Lowell. Came into Boston. . . . In the evening with Holmes: very kind and wonderfully talkative, but with a good deal of sense and really impressing me as an extremely clever man. . . . *Tues.* 13 *Oct.* . . . In the evening went out to Lowell's: took leave of him with sadness.[1]

But this intercourse with men of letters came at the end of a long journey, which was rapid and solitary. Stephen had made the sweep which ended at Washington by the middle of September. He rarely slept more than a couple of nights at

[1] Of the interview with Emerson, Stephen spoke long afterwards in 'Studies of a Biographer,' vol. iv. p. 130.

one place, and much of his sleeping was in railroad-cars and steam-boats. For the more part he was much alone, though as a companion on the Mississippi he had Mr. Dana, whose 'Two Years before the Mast' he had consumed when a school-boy. His new friends in the East had given him some letters that were useful to him in the West; but he did not see many people of importance. At Washington, however, he saw Abraham Lincoln, and it is for him to tell the story.

> [Washington] is just now very empty, Congress not being in session, and, the only purpose for which the place exists being to act as a Political Exchange, it is pretty well cleared out just now. The Government or Administration (as they call them here) are, however, all present, and I have had the honour of seeing them all together, as thus: The letter which Fawcett got me from Bright to Seward proved very useful. It brought Seward down completely. Bright's name is (as Fawcett may tell him) a complete tower of strength in these parts. They all talked of him with extra-ordinary admiration, and I was obliged to conceal the very distant nature of my relations to him by ingenious prevarication. I said that I had not seen him since the end of the parliamentary session, as I had been absent from England since that time, and I did not let on that I had only seen him once, two years before that epoch, and then from the gallery of the House of Commons when he was on the floor. Thanks to information received from Fawcett, I managed to fence all inquiries pretty well. Seward was civil [and] took me in the morning to the President's house, where I sat with old Abe and others for half an hour or so till all the Cabinet were assembled and ready for business.
>
> Seward did not, however, impress me very favourably. He is a little, rather insignificant-looking man, with a tendency to tell rather long-winded and rather pointless stories and to make[1] those would-be profoundly philosophical observations about the manifest destiny and characteristics of the American people, of which Americans have

[1] 'take,' MS.

got a string ready for use on all occasions, and all of which I now know by heart. He rather amused me by the coolness with which he talked about government affairs to me as a total stranger. Within five minutes after he saw me he said that if England permitted the rebel rams to start, they would declare war—a proposition which, as I told you before, I think not unlikely. . . .

I had, as I say, the honour of shaking hands with old Abe. I did not talk to him much, because he was rather awkward, and I am, as you know, rather modest. In appearance he is much better than I expected. He is more like a gentleman to look at than I should have given him credit for from his pictures,[1] and, though tall and bony, has not that clumsy elephantine look the [characterisers ?], such as E[dward] D[icey] in this case, attribute to him. He has [a] particularly pleasant smile, a very jolly laugh, and altogether looks like a benevolent and hearty old gentleman. I felt quite kindly to him. The most remarkable of the other members of the Administration in appearance was Chase, a very fine, powerful-looking man. I only just saw him, however. Of the others I have nothing worth telling. I forgot to mention that old Seward rather provoked me, as I was telling him something of the friends of the North in England and mentioning 'Mill,' by calling him 'Monkton Mill'—a depth of deliberate ignorance to which I should have hoped no decent human being on the other side of the Atlantic would have descended. It is, I fear, true that not only have Americans no university education properly so called, but that very few of them come up to that lofty standard of excellence which we attain in such polishing institutions as Trinity Hall. . . .

'On the morning of Wednesday, September 16, 1863, a solitary traveller might have been, and probably was, observed hurrying down one of the main streets of Washington, his baggage consisting of a comb, toothbrush and pipe.' It would be pleasant to give the whole of the long account of a visit to the seat of war in Virginia that begins thus. It must, I fear,

[1] 'features,' MS.

be sufficient that Stephen slept under canvas, had a few words with General Meade ('a remarkably thin, cadaverous-looking cove') and heard a few shots fired in earnest. But Meade and Lee were manœuvring for position in a wearisome way, and it does not appear that our Cambridge volunteer had any lively desire to see a battle, though he wished to talk with federal soldiers and 'rebel' prisoners, and to establish his conviction that the North must win and slavery must perish. The general result of his investigations he gives in the following passages:

> I have had conversations with a great number of different people round here [Philadelphia] during the last week, and all my conversations on England and politics go round pretty much the same course. First of all, every one asks me at once how it is that Englishmen, who profess to be abolitionists, can sympathise with the South. I then try to persuade them, but don't believe I have yet persuaded one single person, to believe that people in England thought that slavery was not the real question at issue. They perfectly laugh at me. I might as well tell them that in England we did not think that the sun is the cause of daylight. They say that everybody here, whether Secesh, Democrat or Republican, invariably assumes that slavery is the top, bottom, and middle of the whole concern, and that if they were to assume anything else, they would be thought insane. . . . However strongly I assert the contrary, they obviously assume that we in England must have given up our hatred to slavery, or at least that the upper classes must, for they always seem to be aware that the popular sentiment in England is different from that of the *Times*-reading population. Does Fawcett remember our grand set-to at Luard's (when you were upstairs) *à propos* to this with Pemberton and Girdlestone? Mind this is not the peculiarity of the upper classes [here]. I never saw a newspaper nor heard an argument on a steam-boat or in a railway or a hotel (and I have heard hundreds) in which it was not at once assumed that slavery was the sole cause of the struggle. Many say that the abolitionists were to blame, and very many would (if it were possible) receive back the

South, slavery and all, and give them guarantees for the 'institution' into the bargain ; but two things are absolutely certain to me : (1) that it never entered the head of a rational being on this side of the big pond to attribute the war to anything but slavery ; (2) that the party which is for cutting out slavery, root and branch, is growing steadily stronger.

Well, this being the case, they naturally feel very bitter about English sympathy having gone so strongly on the other side, and, assuming that Englishmen had really understood the nature of the quarrel, I should feel ashamed of my country myself. Of course, I know they didn't, but it is no use trying to drive that into Americans. It only produces shrugs of their shoulders and civil grins.

Assuming, however, that they did understand this, there is still a good deal to be explained about the state of English opinion which it is rather hard to put plainly to them. I really don't know how to translate into civil language what I have heard a thousand times over in England : that both sides are such a set of snobs and blackguards that we only wish they could both be licked, or that their armies are the scum of the earth and the war got up by contractors, or that the race is altogether degenerate and demoralised, and it is pleasant to see such a set of bullies have a fall. I really can't tell them all these little compliments, which I have heard in private conversation word for word, and which are a free translation of *Times* and *Saturday Review*, even if I introduce them with [the] apology (though it is a really genuine apology) that we know nothing at all about them.

Well, the consequence of this is exactly what you might expect. Fifty people have told me in almost the same words : 'Before the war there was growing up in the North an excellent feeling towards England. In the South England was hated, because assumed to be abolitionist ; but here the feeling was steadily improving. Now it is utterly and entirely changed.' . . . However, there is one very serious thing —viz., our abominable privateer business. If Laird could be hanged on a tree for getting two great nations into a quarrel to sell his ships, I should be heartily glad. . . . I

believe that they have good sense enough here to be very anxious to keep out of a quarrel as long as their own war goes on, but if an ironclad comes out from England and gives a decided lift to Jeff. Davis, I think the consequences will be serious. However, we'll hope for the best.

New York,
September 28, 1863.

. . . I calculate that I have given about enough growling, though I am in rather a bad temper this morning. I attribute it partly to my having just been foolish enough to read an article copied into one of the papers here from the *Morning Herald*, which is generally a dreary process enough, and is particularly so when they write to say that we ought to send out ironclads for the South because we are certain to go to war with the North anyhow, and because the South are our natural friends. I should like to bray that fool in a mortar. . . . However, fretting over the *M. Herald* is an occupation for an idiot. Matters are not looking so well for the North as they have been hitherto. It is clear that Rosecrans has had a severe defeat.[1] . . . I almost dread coming back to England to be in my usual position of a minority of one. It is so truly refreshing to be in agreement for once with the greater number of those whom you meet, that I really shrink from being put up again as a target for Xs [name of a Cambridge don in the plural] and other low vermin to exercise their wits upon. However, you need not be afraid but that I shall start on the 14th as proposed. You will see that I am in one of my bear-tearing tantrums this morning (the weather has got warmer suddenly—enough so to wake up the skeeters who made an unprovoked assault upon me last night); but I have really had nothing serious to complain of, and will try to steady myself and go off into a decent, respectable kind of letter . . .

The traveller, it must be conceded, did not always keep himself below boiling-point. Any 'disgusting cant about the

[1] Battle of Chickamauga, September 20, 1863.

kindness of slavery' produced effervescence, and it 'made him savage' to find fools who would give credence to those 'hypocritical humbugs,' the Southern clergy and their talk of slavery as a means of bringing home the blessings of Christianity to the black race. English newspapers are not spared. 'Everything that the *Times* says is either a lie, a blunder, or a mystification.' However, if these letters were published in full, it would be seen that Stephen diligently and soberly prosecuted his inquiry into the meaning of the war and reached the right, if it was also the desired, result. The task of rushing round and talking to all sorts of men was not congenial to him. He often regrets his 'modesty,' and wishes that 'old Fawcett' were with him to cross-examine witnesses. 'I also hear,' he writes, 'that old fox Fawcett with his customary low cunning speaks complimentarily of my letters, and suggests my writing a "book" on America. Perhaps if I had his cheek, I might do so and call it "Ten Years in the United States." But I haven't, and the world will have to wait a little longer for the benefit of my wise reflexions.' In fact, at times he seems to be collecting ammunition much rather for Fawcett's use than for his own. Nor does his enthusiasm for the Northern cause make him see all that is Northern through a rosy mist. Far from it. He became painfully aware that his friends at Cambridge [Mass.] were hardly fair samples of their fellow countrymen. The West—and the West began soon in those days—was very raw. Of the inhabitants of Chicago it is written that 'their manners are those of bagmen and their customs are spitting.' No one whom you meet is capable of a higher degree of polish than 'say Mr. X. my tailor at Cambridge.' 'As for New York politics there is only one thing to be said, viz., that they are rascally.' Two more extracts will disclose some of the traveller's tastes and distastes.

> However, I shook the dust [of Trenton] off my feet after a day or two and came on here to Niagara, which will, I devoutly hope, be the last watering-place I visit over here. There is something disgusting to me about the very air of them ; and this would, if possible, have spoilt even Niagara,

but it isn't possible. . . . The finest view of all is on the Canada side, where you look down into the great whirlpool enclosed by the line of the Horseshoe Fall. This is where the deepest body of water rushes over, and it is the most beautiful sight I ever saw, not even excepting the Jungfrau and Wetterhorn. I invented some metaphysical speculations as to the effects of waterfalls on the human mind, which, however, I shall not communicate. I sat for a long time looking at it yesterday morning, and came to the conclusion that it was on the whole better than I could have expected. Just as I was getting rather poetical, an old cove insisted on talking to me and telling me how he had kept a buggy for forty years, that he would drive me for twenty-five cents an hour in it, and that his conversation was worth a dollar by itself. To prove this he repeated an epitaph (I don't know whether of his own composition) on a young woman who had fallen over and been killed, which was conceived in such terms as these :

> Woman most beauteous of the human race,
> Cautious of a dangerous place !
> Miss Ruggles at the age of twenty-three
> Was launched into eternity.

I concluded to climb down.

[*Philadelphia.*] When I sent off my last to you I was just on my way to call on one X, a lawyer, to whom one of my Cambridge [Mass.] friends had given me a letter. Said lawyer turned hospitable in the highest degree—almost offensively so. He has been getting me admission to various places, which I was obliged to go and see out of civility, and [this] has involved me in more in the way of sight-seeing than I ever had the misfortune to do before in the same space of time. I have, I expect, been a perfect bore to his friends, for whenever we meet any one he knows in the streets, he clutches hold of him and introduces 'the Rev. Mr. Stephen, the nephew of the celebrated lawyer,' or 'the son of the celebrated historian,' according to the supposed proclivities of the victim, and begs him to take me to his extensive coalyard or to his lunatic asylum or his world-

famous book-store or his church or his [illegible], or in fact to anything that is his. I have providentially avoided doing any hospitals, to which I have a special aversion; but, on the other hand, I have been dragged through a great number of churches and expected to criticise the architecture—the said X entertaining a rather perplexing amount of reverence for my character as a British parson, and even threatening me with a bishop. He did not expect me to smoke or drink beer, and thought I should have a holy horror of playing whist for sixpenny points. I fear that I do not quite realise his ideas in all respects, as he was very inquisitive as to the style of costume adopted by the genuine animal and some other minor points. . . . The great sight here is the Girard College (which means in American language a big orphan asylum), which is built (also according to American ideas of beauty) after the model of the Parthenon—the building in the world least fitted to be an orphan asylum to my ideas. However, the founder, gaining my eternal gratitude thereby, but being, I fear, a shocking old scapegrace, declared in his will that no clergyman was ever to set foot in this building, and you have to give your honour that you are not in any sense a priest before entering it. I joyfully declined, and avoided presentation to the orphans.[1]

Leslie Stephen pleading benefit of clergy in order that he may escape the orphans is a figure that might detain us for a moment; but we must hasten to the end of his American adventures. He returned to England and soon afterwards poured a broadside into the *Times*. 'The *Times* on the American War: a Historical Study,' by L. S., was published in 1865. Long afterwards he was asked why the pamphlet did not bear his name in full, the questioner being his friend Mr. C. F. Adams, who is well known to all who have studied the history of the relations between Great Britain and the United States.

[1] 'No ecclesiastic, missionary, or minister of any sect whatsoever,' is to be admitted even as a visitor: Will of Stephen Girard, who died in 1831. I have to thank the President of the College for a copy. What Stephen says of Mr. Girard is, I take it, a mere inference from his will, and one which Stephen would not have drawn at a later time.

Stephen's answer was that 'the wordly-wise' had persuaded him that at the outset of his career as a journalist he must not incur the enmity of the *Times*. He had no cause to be ashamed of his pamphlet. It is a volley of a hundred pages, well-directed and heavily shotted. A few lines from it will suffice to show the position of the battery.

'If I had proved that the *Times* had made a gigantic blunder from end to end as to the causes, progress, and consequences of the war, I should have done little. Its opinion might be proved worthless: but it would be merely worthless in the sense in which the old astronomers' notions of the solar system were worthless; they did the solar system no harm. But I contend that I have proved simultaneously that it was guilty of "foolish vituperation," and as I am weak enough to think anything a serious evil which tends to alienate the freest nation of the old world from the great nation in the new, whose foundation is amongst our most glorious achievements, I contend, also, that I have proved the *Times* to be guilty of a public crime. It was, I admit, due to gross ignorance, and not to malice; it may, I also admit, take such comfort as it can from the consideration that equal errors were committed in America; but I still think its conduct criminal.'[1]

The sort of praise that the author must have desired came from Lowell. 'Your pamphlet,' he said, 'was a model of its kind; it was what I call really able; there was such a rigid abstinence from rhetoric, and the logic of it was so seriously dispassionate. May the Lord never deliver *me* into your hands!' The letter from which these words were taken[2] was, said its writer, the first that he had sent across the water since the war began. 'England *can't* like America, do what she or we will, and I doubt if I should were I an Englishman. But I think that the usages of society should hold between nations and see no particular use in her taking every opportunity to *tell* us how disagreeable and vulgar we are.'

The pamphlet left its mark on some memories. 'How well

[1] 'The *Times* on the American War' (published by Ridgway), p. 107.

[2] 'Letters of J. R. Lowell,' i. 401. The laudatory words were, at Stephen's instance, omitted from the printed copy.

I remember it! It was a revelation to me of two things—some faint conception of the truth of the American struggle, and, above all, a revelation of its author. I had not recognised either in the unobservant way of young men; but they have been great facts in my life ever since.' So, congratulating Leslie on his knighthood in 1902, wrote Sir George Trevelyan. 'The wind of a tutor of Trinity Hall' was not the whole man. The discovery that Stephen could think seriously and write vigorously came as a surprise to many men at Cambridge just when Cambridge had lost him. 'It is curious,' says Sir George Trevelyan, who was seven years his junior, 'to recall how I regarded him. The stories afloat among undergraduates about him were all of a man indifferent to convention, very kind to the young, brusque in speech, and absorbed in all forms of athleticism. I can honestly say that it never even occurred to me that he was an intellectual notability.' Dr. Morgan has said much the same, and has given an explanation. 'This lack of prescience on the part of Stephen's Cambridge friends, regarding the development of his literary powers, was certainly in some measure due to his unique modesty and reticence about his own studies and all that concerned himself. His self-effacement and self-depreciation were at times quite provoking. It is only the latter that forbids me from saying that he was one of the most strictly truthful and accurate men I ever met.'

Stephen liked 'Yankees' (as he always called them) to the end: or rather he thought that the best 'Yankee' was about the best of mankind, and letters to certain Americans will for the future be the most serviceable part of my material. Some of his English friends professed to detect an American accent, or would say that his outward man was Americanised. A permanent beard, without which I cannot see him, dates from his visit to the New World: temporary or Alpine beards there had been. It is vaguely reported that with a friend he once sought admission to Woolwich Arsenal or some such place, that objection was taken to his foreign look, that the friend explained that Mr. Stephen was an English clergyman, and that the objector repeated 'English clergyman!' and added somewhat more. Also Stephen might have asserted a claim to

be one of the first Englishmen who tried critically to analyse 'American Humour,' and this was one of the first subjects on which he tried his 'prentice hand as a man of letters.[1] But it is more important to observe that the visit to Lowell occurred at a critical moment in his life. Just then he was hesitating about his future. Diffident of his powers, with a diffidence that we can hardly understand when we see how his pen runs, he was doubting whether he should leave Cambridge and try his fortune in the literary world. 'We young prigs,' observes a friend of his and mine, 'were very sniffy when Leslie Stephen took to letters.' He saw Lowell at Elmwood, 'among his books.' 'He fell in love with me, so to speak': so wrote Stephen after Lowell's death. It was love at first sight. What they talked of as the smoke went up I do not know. Mostly, perhaps, of the war, though we have seen that they wandered as far as Matthew Arnold, and shall see that they wandered as far as the immortality of the soul. Of the Chapter House at Westminster, it is fairly certain that they did not speak. It took Lowell little time to discover that 'L. S.' was the 'most, lovable of men,' and we may be very sure that the force that was drawing Stephen towards literature was, to say the least, greatly augmented during his stay at Elmwood.

By this time many men have gone from the one Cambridge to the other to find hospitality and friendship, and to weave some of those little threads which make a bond between two nations. It is plain sailing now over a sea as smooth as glass. We can none of us complain of the adversity of the times. Leslie Stephen was no fair-weather friend. When he set out on his journey the sky was dark and the waves ran high.[2]

[1] *Cornhill Magazine*, Jan. 1866.

[2] Stephen spoke of his first visit to Elmwood in a letter to Mr. Norton, printed in 'Letters of J. R. Lowell' (1894), ii. 494. *See also* 'Some Early Impressions,' *National Review*, Oct. 1903, p 222. The phrase, 'L. S. most lovable of men,' occurs in Lowell's essay, 'On a certain Condescension in Foreigners,' reprinted in 'My Study Windows.' It was written during, or shortly after, Stephen's second visit to America. In the 'Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society,' Ser. 2, vol. xviii. p. 254, will be found a speech by the President, Mr. C. F. Adams, delivered on the occasion of Stephen's death. Mr. Adams spoke of Stephen's 'arraignment' of the *Times*. He had referred to it also in his 'Lee at Appomatox,' p. 75.

VIII

FREE-THINKING AND PLAIN-SPEAKING

(1862–1865)

The chronological sequence of events has in some measure been neglected in order that in this chapter we might fix our attention upon a matter of importance: namely, Stephen's abandonment of the religion of his forefathers. I desire to tell the story as truthfully and as completely as I can; but the materials are not very ample. Stephen did not believe that his internal history would be interesting to the world; it seemed to him in no way anomalous; he thought himself a very ordinary specimen of humanity. Moreover, though he enjoyed the books of men who have turned themselves inside out for the public gaze, he did not think the better of those who have exercised themselves in this manner. I have not therefore much evidence of a first-hand kind, save the little that at various times he put into print.

We may first recall a few dates. Stephen went to Cambridge as an undergraduate when he was not yet eighteen in the autumn of 1850. He took his first degree in January 1854, and became 'Goodbehere fellow' at Christmas of the same year. He was ordained deacon on December 21, 1855, became a 'presbyter fellow' and tutor of his college in the spring of 1856, was ordained priest at Ely on Trinity Sunday, 1859, resigned the tutorship in the summer of 1862, left Cambridge at the end of 1864, but retained his fellowship until his marriage in the summer of 1867.

There can, I think, be little doubt that, from the moment when he entered Trinity Hall, Stephen regarded the clerical profession as one which was not unlikely to be his. Hopes of a

fellowship were entertained, if not by him, at all events for him ; and, the statutes of the college being what they were, this meant that unless he definitely chose the law, he must definitely choose the church, and that without long delay. Towards the life of a barrister he had not, I should suppose, much inclination, though he was compelled to think of it as a possibility some years after his clerical career had come to an end. Furthermore, he had been brought up in the belief, happily erroneous, but not unfounded, that physically he would never be fit for any mode of life that demanded strenuous exertion of mind and body. So long as he was an undergraduate he was regarded at home as a delicate youth whose strength was to be husbanded. Also Sir James Stephen earnestly desired that at least one of his sons should be a clergyman, and, just when Leslie was going to college, Fitzjames, after an internal debate of which Leslie has given an interesting account, was deciding that he would be, what nature had certainly meant him to be—a lawyer.[1] Not only did the father hold that the clerical was the noblest and happiest of all estates of life, but, so I have been told by one who had some opportunities of observing him, seemed to hope that some of those intellectual difficulties, which beset his own intensely religious but sceptical mind, would pass away if his sons had that theological erudition, the lack of which he was wont, in his modest manner, to deplore. As an undergraduate Leslie was, I imagine, being gently and kindly, and perhaps almost without his knowing it, impelled towards the church. Meanwhile he was not thinking seriously of the future. He was greatly enjoying his new strength, his new liberty, his new friendships, and was attending with due diligence to his mathematics and to Mr. Todhunter's insistent 'Push on, push on!'

Then that 'bye-fellowship' fell within his grasp, and the prospect of a tutorship and of life at Cambridge. He took the bait and was caught. He made the journey to York and returned a deacon.

Let us consider what the bait was. In the first place, he

[1] 'Life of Sir J. F. Stephen,' pp. 114 ff.

wished to please his father, who would have been sorely disappointed if the third and last of his sons had refused to tread the sacred way. A second reason I will give in Leslie's words, written in 1895 : 'My real motive was that I was very anxious to relieve my father of the burthen of supporting me. You will see in my "Life of Fitzjames"[1] a reference to my father's anxieties at this time, which may help to explain my feelings. By taking the tutorship I became independent, and after my degree I never cost my father anything.' Into this matter we need not go far ; but Sir James was not a rich man, had done much for his sons, and was apt to take gloomy views—so was Leslie—in matters of finance. Another sentence follows in the paper from which I am quoting : 'I was for a time very much attached to Cambridge.' These three reasons, but especially the last, I take to be the short of a long story.

I am bound to add that some of those who knew Leslie and were interested in his future thought that he was making a mistake and warned him. But, given adequate orthodoxy—a matter of which a word will be said by-and-by—it is not easy to condemn his decision. I do not suppose that towards a clerical career of the ordinary kind he had any 'serious call.' That, however, is not the question. The question is whether he had a serious call to be a tutor of his college, and that question his pupils have sufficiently answered. I do not say that he did believe, for he was modest, but I do say that he had every right to believe, that physically, intellectually, and morally, he was the man for the post. He had every right to believe that young men would 'worship' him and that old men would look back to the influence that he had upon their lives as stimulating and elevating, as sane and sound and holy. Of what might happen if he should ever wish to marry, and by marrying lose his fellowship, I do not suppose that he thought. Even when he left Cambridge, he was persuaded that he was not a marrying man. His colleague in the tutorship remained at Cambridge celibate, uncaptured, to the end of a long life. At any rate, retirement from the tutorship might seem a far-off event to the

[1] 'Life of Sir J. F. Stephen,' p. 113.

young man of two-and-twenty. And if and when retirement came, it would be to a college living; and there was no reason why the Leslie Stephen of 1854 should not believe that some twenty or thirty years later he would make an exemplary rector of a country parish, with scholarly tastes and sufficient care for the spiritual and temporal welfare of his flock. In fairness it should be remembered that in those days a considerable number of the ablest young men still took holy orders.

As to his orthodoxy, I think that, to use a phrase of his own, 'he took such things pretty easily in those days'; but I see no reason to suppose that he was not well within the Anglican pale, and indeed he seems to have held much more of the old traditional creed than is accepted nowadays by many highly respected divines. It is true that late in life he had a way of saying that he 'never believed' some of the legends that are to be found in the Old Testament. But this phrase, so far as I am aware, always occurs in connexion with a 'discovery' that he makes, namely, the discovery that he has 'never believed.' His fullest statement is, I think, the following: 'My own experience is, I imagine, a very common one. When I ceased to accept the teaching of my youth, it was not so much a process of giving up beliefs as of discovering that I had never really believed. The contrast between the genuine convictions that guide and govern our conduct, and the professions which we were taught to repeat in church, when once realised, was too glaring. One belonged to the world of realities and the other to the world of dreams. The orthodox formulæ represent, no doubt, a sentiment, an attempt to symbolise emotions which might be beautiful, or to indicate vague impressions about the tendency of things in general; but to put them side by side with real beliefs about facts was to reveal their flimsiness.'[1] Or again: 'I was not discovering that my creed was false, but that I had never really believed it. I had unconsciously imbibed the current phraseology; but the formulæ belonged to the superficial stratum of my thought instead of to the fundamental convictions. I will not inquire what is the inference as to my intellectual development. I fear that it would be rather

[1] 'Social Rights and Duties,' i. 12.

humiliating, or at least imply that the working of "what I pleased to call my mind" had been of a very easy-going and perfunctory character.'[1] Once more, and with a concrete illustration: 'I read Comte, too [besides other books], and became convinced, among other things, that Noah's flood was a fiction (or rather convinced that I had never believed in it) and that it was wrong for me to read the story as if it were a sacred truth.'

To discuss this strain of language about 'beliefs' and 'real beliefs' might take us far, even unto the writing of a new Grammar of Assent. To me it seems intelligible enough, though not perhaps very accurate. If you have to 'discover' or to 'become convinced' that you never really believed the story of Noah's flood or of Jack the Giant-killer, then you have really believed it, however baseless and superficial, however otiose and inoperative the belief may have been. At any rate, the Stephen who took orders had yet to discover that he did not believe in Noah's flood, and when in old age he said that he acted 'rather—perhaps I ought to say very—thoughtlessly,' or, 'rashly, though not, I trust, with conscious insincerity,' he was, so it seems to me, measuring his past conduct by a high standard. None can be too high; but this was the standard not only of a mind which had always been honest, but of one that had become unusually thoughtful and scrupulous. Such a mind begins to doubt whether it ever believed those fairy tales. The question, 'Who believes them now?' is soon followed by the question, 'Who ever believed them?'

The Stephen of 1855 took a good deal on trust. Whether candidates for orders were commonly warned to take nothing on trust I do not know. His special trust seems to have been a rather general belief that whatever difficulties there might be were in course of being removed by Frederick Maurice. Stephen had heard Maurice lecture at King's College, and had been impressed, as none who saw and heard him could fail to be impressed, by his saintly character. But Maurice, it will be remembered, was professor of English history and literature, though those subjects were apt in his hands to become philoso-

[1] 'Some Early Impressions,' *National Review*, Oct. 1903, p. 214.

phical discourse; and what theology Stephen acquired during his brief visit to the College came to him, I take it, from the orthodox Dr. Jelf, by whom Maurice was ejected. Stephen has left it on record (and I see no irony here) that he used to listen with wonder to Jelf's exposition of the Thirty-nine Articles, marvelling how the Church of England had always hit off precisely the right solution in so many and such tangled controversies.[1] I do not think that as an undergraduate Stephen studied Maurice's works or, for the matter of that, theology of any sort. Nor was he intimate with Maurice, though, when he had lately been ordained, a friend, who accompanied him to hear Maurice preach at Lincoln's Inn, believes that after the service the preacher congratulated the young man upon the step that he had taken. Certainly there was for a while a certain amount of discipleship: enough to make Stephen permanently sorry that in the days of his exodus he wrote about Maurice some words that gave pain where he would willingly have given none.[2] And if it would be easy to exaggerate the theological lore of the ordinand, it is also necessary to acquit him of having read many books of the 'dangerous' class. I do not think that he had as yet read even Mill's 'Logic,' though his father read it when it first appeared, and saw at a glance how important and how 'dangerous' it was. It does not seem certain that the ordinands of that time were, as a general rule, much better equipped than Stephen was for the defence of the faith. If we do not believe that during the few divinity lectures which they had to hear, they were commonly engaged 'in making surreptitious bets or sketching flattering portraits of the professor,' so neither need we believe that Stephen's industrious notes were mere exercises in stenography. At Heidelberg in 1855, so I see from a note-book, he was 'getting a certain amount of Greek Testament done'; had 'finished Luke' and had 'begun Romans.' He duly attended the English church in that town, though once the sermon was 'infamously bad.'

As to duties that could be called clerical, Stephen had few, if any, to perform beyond reading in the college chapel such

[1] 'Life of Sir J. F. Stephen,' p. 88. [2] *See* below, p. 261.

part of the service as a deacon may read. He had been more than a year in orders before he was called upon to preach a sermon (April 24, 1857). 'There were,' I am told, 'very few sermons in the college chapel, about two a term,' and the senior tutor was usually the preacher. Whether from first to last the Rev. Leslie Stephen preached as many as five-and-twenty sermons I should gravely doubt. One specimen exists —I fancy that he did not know of its existence, for of his sermons he destroyed what he could find. It is 'to be praught,' so says an endorsement, on Sunday, March 6, 1859: that is, shortly before priest's orders were taken. It is an ordinary, straightforward discourse on 'the character of St. Paul considered as an example,' addressed to young men by a preacher whom we might infer to be more interested in morals than in dogma, but in whose utterances there seems to be no trace of heretical pravity. We might call it commonplace; we could not call it shocking. Another of his texts was, as we might expect, 'Quit you like men; be strong,' and what he said impressed a pupil who was worth impressing. Another pupil says that 'his sermon, which was always short and full of condensed thought, was delivered in such a way as to suggest that he had learnt the composition by heart and as to make the auditors fearful that he would break down.' It is not very easy to guess why he should have remained so long in the diaconate. A 'presbyter fellow' ought, we should have thought, to have become a presbyter as soon as possible; but we may easily suppose that no need for a second priest in college had disclosed itself. The fact that as late as 1859 Stephen submitted himself a second time to episcopal hands is to me a proof that his doubts accumulated but slowly. It seems proper to observe that his father was still living, though he died a few months later; but I do not think that at the end of his life Sir James Stephen saw much difference between priest and deacon, and 'sacerdotalism' was as hateful to him as ever it was to Leslie. I am told, but no accurate date is given, that Leslie preached a few sermons in the church of St. Edward at Cambridge. That church was connected by a very close tie with Trinity Hall; but to preach there cannot, I think, have

been any part of Stephen's collegiate duty. That his discourses slightly savoured of German critical methods I am also told; but we shall see below that his preaching did not come to an end until some time after his resignation of the tutorship.

While his doubts were collecting he was duly reticent before his pupils. 'He sought,' says Mr. Kelly, 'to make us worthy of being Englishmen—and I ought to add "Hall men," for he had a marvellous love for Trinity Hall—and not to disturb our particular views. A considerable number of us took holy orders, and no one of us that did could ever have to regret a single word that Stephen said to him.' Perhaps he was not quite so careful with men who were not to be ordained; but it is not a substantially different picture that we obtain from one of them: 'I knew him well enough to "chaff" him, and once he got angry and told me that nobody in the University worried him as I did. I have talked with him on every conceivable subject, including religion, and to me, who had been brought up strictly, some of the things he said seemed rather strong. I always felt that he held himself back on these matters, and was afraid that he might unduly influence me through his position. At that time he was not an agnostic, but he was certainly going on towards agnosticism, and it was no surprise to me that his thorough honesty soon afterwards led him openly to adopt that position. . . . Stephen impressed me, and I believe all of us, with the feeling that he favoured the highest honesty and moral principle.' Many things that would have sounded 'rather strong' in 1860 are now said from the University pulpit. We may be very sure that when Stephen counselled the late Canon Ainger to take orders, Stephen still thought that the Anglican creed was tenable.[1] Leslie read the church service 'in an impressive and beautiful manner,' at least so his mother thought in 1859 and 1861, and her evidence is not to be rejected.

Mr. Kelly has spoken of Stephen as a personification of 'the muscular Christianity' of his time, and that name—which is said to have been invented by Mr. T. C. Sandars, the *Saturday*

[1] *See* Miss Sichel's 'Life and Letters of Alfred Ainger,' p. 64.

reviewer—suggests the standard by which Stephen's behaviour as a clergyman ought to be judged. Stephen himself is, I imagine, the author of the phrase which tells how the muscular Christian's creed was that he should 'fear God and walk a thousand miles in a thousand hours,'[1] though I do not know that he formulated this symbol until he could look at all kinds of Christianity from the outside and could no longer be regarded as a propagator of athletics. The allusion to Captain Barclay's famous feat, performed upon the Newmarket road, is in Stephen's manner, and the editor of the 'Dictionary of National Biography' reserved the great pedestrian for his own hand along with the major lights of the literary firmament. But this by the way. We have seen how in 1863, when Mr. Joseph Mayor wrote something of 'that pestilent muscular Christianity,' Stephen rushed into a fray over 'the poll degree,' though not without a protestation that the missile had not struck him. It is needless to inquire how close a connexion there ever was in any man's mind between Christianity and muscular development: how definite a belief that the Lord delighteth in a pair of sturdy legs. It is needless also to inquire how far in Stephen's case the pure joy of going fast and far was implicated with a desire to keep his young men out of that mischief which Satan provides for the idle. What seems necessary is a mere allusion to the sect or school or group, or whatever we are to call it, of muscular Christians, because I suppose that since those days there has been some, though I cannot guess how much, change in the opinion generally entertained (that is a very vague phrase) about the conduct proper for clergymen. This is not the preamble to an admission of flagrant defects. I should not be surprised if even in the days of his tutorship Stephen swore; and a little swearing was thought no blemish in your muscular Christian. Stephen used in later days to recall Charles Kingsley's struggles with the fourth letter of the alphabet. And now I have made the only admission that I have to make. Leslie Stephen was not ascetic in the common sense of that term; but he was Spartan. A less self-indulgent man you would not easily find. If left to

[1] 'Sketches from Cambridge,' p. 22.

himself, he would have eaten the same dinner every day of the year. He drank wine, but detested talk of vintages. He would play a rubber, but detested talk of whist. We should not claim for him all the Christian virtues. He was hot-tempered, and he could be impatient, which no clergyman ought to be; and though he was very modest, we could not call him meek; but he was incapable of bearing malice, and the sun seldom went down upon his wrath. That he could think seriously of serious matters and sacrifice much for conscience sake will sufficiently appear from our story.

However, the doubts marshalled themselves, and Stephen lacked neither courage nor honesty. We have seen what he was reading—Mill and Comte and Kant and so forth. 'I became convinced, among other things, that Noah's flood was a fiction (or, rather, convinced that I had never believed in it) and that it was wrong for me to read the story as if it were a sacred truth. So I had to give up my position at Trinity Hall. Upon my stating in the summer of 1862 that I could no longer take part in the chapel services, I resigned my tutorship at the request of the Master. The College, however, allowed me to retain my fellowship and hold some minor offices. This, I believe, was due in great part to Fawcett. I refer to the fact in my "Life" of him[1] where I speak of being able to return his good offices at Christmas 1866.'

These words were written by Stephen in 1895. I fear that we must be content with them, though they raise some questions to which I would willingly have given a fuller and technically accurate answer. This, however, I am unable to do. What with old statutes and new statutes and the unwritten law of the college, I cannot exactly tell what was Stephen's legal position when he declined to take part in the chapel service. Those also who once knew all about the matter, though they have answered my inquiries with the greatest courtesy, have, owing to the lapse of time, been unable to supply me with all the relevant facts. My remarks must be very few.

In 1862 the old 'Goodbehere fellowship' that Stephen had once held had been abolished. There were by this time three

[1] 'Life of Fawcett,' p. 126.

clerical fellowships on the foundation, held by Henry Latham, Leslie Stephen, and Mr. F. L. Hopkins. The critical meeting took place on a Saturday. Mr. Hopkins, who had recently been elected, had gone to Ely to be ordained next day, and he believed that his ordination would surmount the difficulty that had arisen in the matter of service in the college chapel. On his return the Master, Dr. Geldart, told him, to his surprise, that the junior tutorship had been vacated and that he had been appointed in Stephen's place. The fellows had by this time dispersed for the summer, and Mr. Hopkins, to whom I am especially grateful, cannot remember that he ever heard precisely what had happened during his short absence. Now whether Stephen's declaration of his inability to read the service could have been treated as *ipso jure* a forfeiture of the tutorship, I cannot say; but apparently it was not so treated. Nor does it seem that his retention of the tutorship would have cast on the other clerical fellows a heavier burden than they were willing to bear. As we have seen, Mr. Hopkins did not think that it would, and, as a matter of fact, for five years afterwards Trinity Hall had only three fellows in holy orders, namely, the two tutors and the Rev. Leslie Stephen.[1] Again, the Master, with the assent of a college meeting, could remove a tutor for good cause, and I am not saying that Stephen had not given what some people might consider good cause for his removal. But Mr. Hopkins thinks that the then fellows must have been almost unanimous in desiring to retain Stephen. I can add two sentences from a letter to a friend written by Stephen a few years afterwards. 'When I proposed to give up my tutorship, a senior fellow said that he could not stand an unorthodox tutor in the college for fear of the effect on the morals of the undergraduates; and it was partly owing to his imposing remarks that I had to give up my place. In that he did me a great service as I should otherwise perhaps have been buried in Cambridge to this day.' At the moment when he wrote this Stephen was more interested in certain subsequent and romantic adventures of 'my orthodox friend' (who, I may

[1] Stephen's successor in the fellowship was Mr. Edward Carpenter, who in due course followed Stephen's example.

remark, was not a clergyman) than in his own past history, and he was not concerned to make a fuller statement. I take it, however, that the Master was convinced that his resignation was desirable ; and Stephen was the man to say, 'If there is any talk about my harming the morals of the undergraduates or any doubt about my position, of course I resign.' I have been assured by more than one of the fellows of the college that, whatever details may now be doubtful, one thing is quite certain, namely, that Stephen never took his stand upon a merely legal right. Also I know that he had thought it probable that both the tutorship and the fellowship must be abandoned.

As to the fellowship, here again there are some little difficulties. It is not easy to see how the college could 'allow him to retain it,' if those terms be nicely used. Either he had forfeited it or he had not ; and in the former case I should not suppose that the college had any power of dispensation. Nor, again, is any cause of forfeiture obvious at first sight, as it could not be said that no other clerical fellow would accept the tutorial office. If Stephen had held his fellowship under certain statutes that had lately been made, he would, whether cleric or lawyer, have lost his fellowship had he 'openly seceded' from the Church of England. But he did not, I think, hold his fellowship under those new statutes, and in 1862 he had, I take it, done nothing that could be construed as a 'secession'—a very different matter from a declaration that he would not conduct divine service. But it was, I believe, fairly arguable that the fellowship that he held was inseparably annexed by long-continued custom to the tutorship that he had resigned, and Fawcett's good offices seem to have consisted in convincing his hearers—mostly lawyers—that this was not the case. To be quite candid, I think that they were desirous to be convinced. A few days afterwards Stephen in a letter told a pupil that 'the master and most of the fellows' had been 'extremely kind.' No drop of bitterness tainted his love for the college of which, in his old age, he became an honorary fellow. His original fellowship he retained until he lost it by marriage in 1867, some two or three years after he had

abandoned, and after it was generally known that he had abandoned, Christianity. I say this expressly, because I would not unduly magnify the sacrifice or the scrupulosity. Fellowships were not offices. They were regarded as prizes. Stephen had won his prize, had honestly satisfied the condition of taking orders, and, do what he could, he could not by his own act deprive himself of his sacred 'character' or of the disabilities annexed by law to his clerical condition. Had all this occurred a few years later, he might have taken a somewhat different view of the situation and have touched no penny that, however faintly, bore the taint of a test. As it was, he had done enough to earn the gratitude of all honest men. He is one of our liberators. He had set an example at Cambridge which in course of time others would follow and others would better.[1] He had given up a large part of his income, he had thought it likely that he would lose the whole, and he had sacrificed a career that was very pleasant to him. For that career he was fit; that he was fit for any other he did not know. Just about this time he was offered the editorship of the *Reader*, a newspaper in which Thomas Hughes, J. M. Ludlow, and others were interested. The bearer of the offer has told me that, in reply, Stephen said that he had never thought of literature as a possible profession, but would consult his brother.[2] It would be utterly untrue to say that he abandoned his clerical career in order that he might devote himself to letters, though when the step had been taken, he could stave off a pupil's questions by saying that he was tired of teaching Euclid and had some literary projects.

He could not tear himself from Cambridge. He lingered on for two years and a half, holding some college offices as bursar and steward, examining in the moral sciences, running with the boat, walking matches against runners, championing Fawcett in divers electoral contests, pamphleteering about 'the poll degree,' giving his summers to the Alps, his Easters to the

[1] It was not until 1869 that Henry Sidgwick and others resigned their fellowships.

[2] The *Reader* began its career in Jan. 1863. For its history *see* 'Personal Reminiscences of Sir Frederick Pollock,' ii. 128–133.

Lakes, visiting Lowell and the seat of war, trying diffidently, and not always successfully, to place an article in *Macmillan's Magazine*. 'My last two years of residence,' he said in 1895, 'were a mistake. I became heartily sick of the University life, which had now become objectless enough.' He lived to wonder at his own want of ambition. But these were the years when he made up his mind once and for ever about religion. He left Christianity behind him, and much more as well. He was rapid: he strode 'from peak to peak like a pair of compasses,' his regard for appearances varying inversely with his velocity. Exactly to trace his route might be impossible and is unnecessary. It was no 'new pass' then, and is a high-way now. A brief stage of unsettlement seems to be represented by the letters written from America in 1863. The traveller took a good deal of interest in what he saw of churches and sects in the New World, and, if his remarks are not always very reverent, they at all events show that he has nothing to conceal from his mother. Two short extracts may indicate what is meant. 'I went into one of the churches by the way this morning, rather in the character of a philosophical observer, or, towards the end of the service, of one rather "heavy under the word." It always amuses me to go to one of these churches. They take things so uncommonly cool.' 'Its subscription [that of the Episcopal Church] must be pleasingly lax. A bishop asked a candidate for ordination the other day whether he believed the Thirty-nine Articles. Candidate said he didn't. Bishop asked whether he agreed with the principal articles. Candidate replied that he would rather not commit himself. Candidate was passed, the bishop saying that he had no authority to inquire into anything but his willingness to use the Liturgy. I wish bishops had as much sense in England. The principles of the [Episcopal] Church [in America] are, on the whole, however, high church; at any rate, not Calvinistic. Well, so much for church matters, which interested me, if they don't you.' In his traveller's note-book he tells in shorthand of a conversation with one of his new American friends. 'His theory was that people would give up Christianity as at present constituted, but not Christianity altogether—in fact, that they

would adopt a sort of half-sentimental Unitarianism. I thought a bit, and expressed agreement with him, as I did the other day when Lowell said that he wanted no one to demonstrate to him that he had got an immortal soul. I should like some one to prove it to me, and as a first step to tell me what it means.' Our next paragraph will make it probable that even after the return from America Stephen preached once or twice : possibly from the pulpit of one of his friends of the Broad Church ; but the date of the last sermon is but loosely indicated.

The rest of the route was quickly accomplished. Stephen left Cambridge at the end of 1864, and made the following entry at the beginning of a book which was to contain, and in the end did contain, the results of a long course of serious reading. 'Jan. 26, 1865. I have now finally left Cambridge, and, as I am beginning a new system both in life generally and in this book in particular, I set down a few remarks on the state of mind which leads me to it. I leave Cambridge for these reasons : (1) I was growing more and more discontented with the desultory nature of my life there, cut up daily by trifling employments, such as coaching the boat, and social wanderings, and cut up every few weeks by vacations. I never sat down to anything, and to do so would have required a calmer temperament and more resolution than I possess. (2) I had no prospects. With my religious theories, or rather with my want of religious theories, I could not have accepted any university preferment, even if I could have got the offer. (3) Having no other opening, I had resolved to take to literature, and London is plainly the best field for that profession. (4) I wished to live with my mother and specially with my sister. [Then, after some account of literary projects and an intended course of reading] : Finally, I make the following note of my creed. Will it change ? My faith in anything like religion has been gradually growing dimmer. I can scarcely believe that two and a half years ago I was still reading prayers as a parson, and that little more than a year ago I was preaching. I now believe in nothing, to put it shortly ; but I do not the less believe in morality, &c. &c. I mean to live

and die like a gentleman if possible.' This memorandum was written in shorthand, only for his own eye, and the wording is lax enough. It tells us, however, all that we need know. As to his question, that is answered now. His creed did not change. At all events, the negative side of it did not change; and yet he went on believing in 'morality, &c. &c.,' and found it possible, quite possible, to live and die as a gentleman and better.

The task of fitting Stephen's exodus into a history of religion in England, or even into a history of the University of Cambridge, is one for which this is not the place, and mine is not the pen, though I believe that, if dates are duly considered, his action will not seem insignificant, even to those who are depicting the great processes.[1] It is more within our province to inquire whether what he did was done with a light heart or after a severe struggle. The answer is not quite simple.

When he was about seventy years of age, he wrote as follows: 'By degrees I gave up a good deal more [than the legends of the Old Testament]; and here I must make a further confession. Many admirable people have spoken of the agony caused by the abandonment of their old creed. Truth has forced them to admit that the very pillars upon which their whole superstructure of faith rested are unsound. The shock has caused them exquisite pain, and even if they have gained a fresh basis for a theory of life, they still look back fondly at their previous state of untroubled belief. I have no such story to tell. In truth, I did not feel that the solid ground was giving way beneath my feet, but rather that I was being relieved of a cumbrous burden. I was not discovering that my creed was false, but that I had never really believed it.'[2]

On the other hand, what here ensues has been written by

[1] Mr. Benn's excellent 'History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century' (1906), makes it the less necessary for me to speak of the intellectual environment.

[2] 'Some Early Impressions,' *National Review*, Oct. 1903, p. 214. Compare what he said thirty years earlier: 'Free-thinking and Plain-speaking,' p. 331 (American ed. 1905, p. 374). It is substantially the same.

one who was intimate with him from about 1859 onwards and whose memory may be confidently trusted. 'There is one subject connected with Stephen's life at this time, which perhaps I ought not to pass over, for it was the most important in every aspect; and yet I will only refer to it briefly, for even now I do not like to dwell upon the mental torture which he went through. When I first went up [to Trinity Hall], Stephen was a clergyman and took his part in the clerical services in chapel. I was a grieved witness to the misery endured by my friend during the time when doubt as to the truth of revealed religion according to the orthodox view gradually increased, until he made up his mind that his views were incompatible with his continuing to be a clergyman of the Church of England. The pain he suffered was very acute, as was sure to be the case when a highly sensitive and loving nature like his had to pass through such a crisis of life, and was made doubly so because he knew what grief his determination would cause to some of his family who were nearest and dearest to him.'

Is there any contradiction here? I see none. Stephen was a truthful man, and what he said in 1903 and on many earlier occasions is, I verily believe, strictly true. The two accounts are compatible and complementary. We must distinguish between plain-speaking and free-thinking. Sometimes the one is much harder than the other. I have seen many letters written by Stephen between 1866 and 1904; many too in which he speaks of religion; but no one word of regret; only words that tell of relief. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that he suffered acutely while his doubts were taking shape and urging him to action. Of this he said nothing to the public; and his silence will seem natural to those who knew him. He could not tell that part of the story without seeming to take some praise to himself. He would have had to say that the fight was severe while it lasted, but that honesty was victorious. He did not think, at all events towards the end of his life he did not think, that any appreciable degree of credit had been earned by him in this matter, and if in his presence others hinted a different opinion, they provoked a snort of indignation—so I am told, I never ventured the experiment.

But unquestionably his position at Trinity Hall had for a while been extremely painful. Those dubious stories, and the whole system in which they were embedded, grew falser and falser at every repetition, and it was his official duty to go on reading them dressed in a surplice. If one of his undergraduate friends, with some of whom he lived on unusually intimate terms, brought round the conversation to religion, he had to economise the truth or to say something that 'seemed rather strong.' And yet he was bound not to be precipitate. He might be wrong; other people might be right; Mr. Maurice might yet square the circle. Add to this that decisive action on his part would inevitably appear to imply that he thought himself more scrupulous than some of his friends, and nothing could be more repulsive to him than the notion that he was in any way setting himself up to be their superior. There is not much need in his case, so I think, to speak of the prospect of temporal loss—he was not the man to dwell on that—though many pleasant hopes of an active and useful life in Cambridge had to be abandoned, and he was by no means sure of his ability to make a living. Of the fear of giving pain to those whom he loved we will say nothing, though happily it can be said that, when the crisis came, his mother understood and approved his action, and, despite all, was able to rejoice in his candour and his courage. Still few men could feel more intensely the misery of what is called a false position, and it is not improbable that a good deal of the exuberant athleticism of these years was an anodyne. He spoke out. In later days, as his letters show, if friends who were of his way of thinking, but not exactly of his way of speaking, took him to task for his vehemence, he would reply that they never knew what it was to be throttled by a white choker. The throttling was painful; there can be no doubt of it; the effort to be free was exquisitely painful; but when freedom had been won, nothing was lost, and there were no regrets: not one.

In the bad days he was much alone. I mean that he could find little sympathy. Some of his friends did not share his doubts and others did not share his scruples. One intimate friend 'never could bring his mind to take the slightest interest'

in such matters. He had a long conversation with his brother, of which his own share is unreported; but just at this moment Fitzjames, as counsel for Dr. Williams, was more concerned to demonstrate the latitude legally permissible to English clergymen than to consider whether they were morally justified in making unlimited use of their legal liberty.[1] Possibly had Leslie not been shy, he might have found more sympathy, have talked with more men who could bring their minds to his, and have been induced to further hesitation; but his torment would only have been prolonged.

At this point the reader may be glad to see a letter written in 1900, though its introduction requires a short preface. In 1865 Stephen published certain 'Sketches from Cambridge, by a Don.' The book, of which a little must be said at another time, contained the two following passages: 'Our prevailing tone is what I should venture to describe as one of quiet good sense, and what fanatics would consider to be only fit for careless Gallios.'[2] 'At Cambridge even when the discussions [of the American Civil War] were at their wildest, when my best friends would hardly speak to me after a Northern victory, and when I slunk out of the way after a Northern defeat, there was always a means of escape. It was only necessary to turn the conversation upon theology to smooth the troubled waters.'[3] In 1900 in St. Mary's Church at Cambridge a preacher, discoursing of our 'goodly heritage,' took occasion to point out some mistakes in the 'Dictionary of National Biography,' and afterwards to criticise the sentences that have here been quoted, and another that must also be given: 'The one thing that can spoil the social intercourse of well-educated men living in great freedom from unnecessary etiquette is a spirit of misplaced zeal.'[4] 'Yes, indeed,' said the preacher, 'surtout point de zèle. If Mr. Stephen ever tried to draw Mr. Hopkins[5] or Dr. Thompson into trial of tongue-fence on sacred themes, he recoiled, I am very sure, baffled from the sport.' In a note to

[1] 'Life of Sir J. F. Stephen.' p. 188.
[2] 'Sketches,' p. 136.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 141.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 142.
[5] Mr. W. Hopkins of Peterhouse: see what Stephen says of his 'singularly lofty character' in the 'Life of Fawcett,' p. 27.

the printed sermon what follows was added : 'Mr. Stephen has fallen a victim to what we may call the *Wir*-fallacy.[1] Silence does not always give consent. Those who listened to his theological arguments may well have changed the subject, not from indifference, but because no good result could be expected from discussions so conducted. It never occurred to him that his cynicism was the Medusa's head that petrified the company.' This sermon was brought to Stephen's notice by a friend living at Cambridge. In so far as it was a criticism of his representation of the Cambridge of the sixties, he made his reply to it in his 'Early Impressions,' published in 1903.[2] Had that been all that was at stake, no more would have been said here ; but I think that the readers of this memoir would like to see how he took the accusation of bearing a 'Medusa's head.'

October 30, 1900.

DEAR A.[3]—

I return B.'s sermon; and will tell you briefly what I think of his remarks upon me.

I am not surprised that his learning has discovered defects in the D.N.B. I ought, I suppose, to be grateful to him for rejecting the ingenious hypothesis that I had a prejudice against Oxford men ! The case is simply this. I had to get the work done within a limited time and expense if it was to be done at all. If it had been a Government enterprise, I might have been slower and secured more thorough revision. But it was undertaken by an individual, though a very generous and public-spirited man. There was no chance of carrying it through unless it could be kept up to time. I had therefore to trust contributors, choosing the men of most knowledge and sympathy with their subjects—giving Oxford men to Oxford, Catholics to Catholics, &c. In the case of X. the result seems to have been unfortunate, though I have every reason to think Y. a generally competent man. My own ignorance of the history of classical

[1] I gather from the context that this alludes to 'Sind *wir* noch Christen ?'
[2] *National Review*, Oct. 1903, p. 209.
[3] I wish that this letter had been written to me ; but it was not.

criticism in England prevented me from supervising effectually in that and doubtless in many other cases. I can only say that I am sorry. [A few words about one point in the life of X.]

It is hard to answer briefly the remarks upon my Cambridge book, but I will try. I cannot defend all that I said thirty-five years ago when I was a pert young journalist. My phrases may have a certain flippancy, but I think them substantially true.

[The preacher] admits the theological placidity of Cambridge compared with Oxford. He thinks that I misinterpreted it to mean religious indifference. People were silent when I introduced theological topics because my 'Medusa's head' petrified the company. If, however, I tried 'tongue-fence' against Thompson or Hopkins, he is sure that I retired 'baffled from my sport.' I was, that is, the shallow cynic of theological tracts.

I certainly never attacked Thompson or Hopkins or any one else. I think that you will believe me, whatever he might do, when I say that I have always been reluctant to obtrude my opinions upon people to whom they are painful or irritating. I have often thought that I pushed my reticence to cowardice. I never exhibited my 'Medusa's head,' and if I had, surely his friends ought to have rebuked or replied instead of being petrified. I believe that I *should* have been rebuked, but the case never occurred.

The fact is this. I became gradually convinced, after the most serious reflection I could give, that the Christian position was untenable. I therefore gave up my profession and took to literature. During the process I was impressed by the state of mind of my Cambridge contemporaries. Some of them shared my scepticism, but continued to be clergymen. That position may be called 'cynical.' It was not mine, nor was it the ordinary case. The average Cambridge don of my day was (as I thought and think) a sensible and honest man who wished to be both rational and Christian. He was rational enough to see that the old orthodox position was untenable. He did not believe in

Hell, or in 'verbal inspiration' or the 'real presence.' He thought that the controversies upon such matters were silly and antiquated, and spoke of them with indifference, if not with contempt. But he also thought that religious belief of some kind was necessary or valuable, and considered himself to be a genuine believer. He assumed that somehow or other the old dogmas could be explained away or 'rationalised' or 'spiritualised.' He could accept them in some sense or other, but did not ask too closely in what sense. Still less did he go into ultimate questions of philosophy. He shut his eyes to the great difficulties or took the answer for granted. Now such a man might be quite honest as far as he went—but to me it seemed clearer, the more I thought, that the position was inconsistent, and, if distinctly realised, implied intellectual cowardice. Men (as I thought) could see that the old doctrinal outworks were obsolete; but chose to take for granted that they were unimportant. They were really surrendering the key of the position.

I found it necessary to go further, and held, for example, that after abandoning the doctrine of verbal inspiration, there is no real stopping-place till you give up the supernatural character of the Bible altogether. The indifference which I attributed to my contemporaries implied just this illogical compromise. They could throw overboard a number of dogmas with great equanimity, because they did not and could not see the necessary consequences. In many and I think in most cases, this meant that they were 'careless Gallios' as regarded the controversies of the day, but that they accepted the religion of the Church of England, whatever that may be, without bothering themselves as to the ultimate grounds of belief.

Of course some men (Thompson, I suppose, though I know nothing of his special position) were more philosophical. But I should not have been afraid to argue against Thompson if I had found it necessary. Victory in argument does not depend solely upon the ability of the disputant, but also on the strength of the case. I should have used what [the preacher] calls the '*Wir*-argument' in

my own way. I should have referred him to many men of much greater ability than myself and much greater eminence in such matters than he. The fact is that all the arguments are familiar enough, and that he could have said nothing new. If he could, why did he not produce it to confute the infidel? But besides this, I believe that Thompson and other distinguished men would have been half on my side. I was for a time a disciple of Maurice, and, like most people, ended by thinking his whole method utterly unsatisfactory. All the attempts to reconcile the creeds to philosophy, or the Bible to historical criticism, even in the hands of such able men as Lightfoot and Hort (of whom [the preacher] speaks) are in my opinion hopeless. That, I hold, though of course [the preacher] does not, comes out more clearly as time goes on.

Meanwhile, I have only to say that my ablest contemporaries shared my difficulties, though they thought, as I did not, that some way out of them would be discovered, by using old phrases in a new sense. The average Cambridge man of whom I was speaking got out of them by shutting his eyes, and accepting a vague 'unsectarian Christianity'—of that I have said enough. I need only add that my account, flippant perhaps in expression, was the product of my experience during the most important stage of my intellectual development (if I may use such a big word!). I found my companions generally quite indifferent to high church and low church controversies, but somehow comfortably and complacently accepting the Thirty-nine Articles in a lump without asking awkward questions.

I do not think that I am to be called cynical because I found such a position intolerable or for accepting the solution of many (at least) of the most eminent men of my time.

I have gone too far, I fear, and yet could say a great deal more. I only wished that you should understand my view as you seemed to have been interested in [the preacher's] criticisms.

I should have tried to see you on Sunday; but my whole day was occupied in talking about H. Sidgwick for an article

which I have been pressed to write about him. My health is weak just now, and I was quite tired out. . . .

L. STEPHEN.

I will not comment; but there is one other sentence in the sermon that I desire to print. The preacher said this of Dr. Thompson, sometime Master of Trinity: 'Men feared him as haughty and cynical. He was, in fact, very shy, very modest and diffident of his own powers, kind-hearted as a woman, and generous beyond his means.' I have no reason whatever to suppose that this is not true of Dr. Thompson; but this I know, that word by word it is true of Leslie Stephen. And the Medusa's head? That was hardly the head that Lowell saw at Elmwood. However, as the preacher said, 'surtout point de zèle.' Some day Cambridge will commemorate all her benefactors, and among them will be the 'cynic' who loved Cambridge well but honesty better. We have indeed a 'goodly heritage.'[1]

From time to time, in the course of the preceding chapters, I have been drawing upon some reminiscences with which Dr. Morgan, now Master of Jesus College, has very kindly supplied me. I would that I could give them in their entirety; but I must not dwell longer on Stephen's life at college. It is thus that Dr. Morgan ends what he has written, and the words come from the only man now resident at Cambridge who intimately knew 'Stephen of the Hall.'

That Leslie Stephen, pre-eminently brave, sincere and straightforward, was a true friend of mine, I hold to have been a very real privilege. To his memory this slight tribute,

[1] When I wrote the above I had no cause to think that this prediction would in any sort be fulfilled before it was printed. But on June 14, 1906, the Cambridge Senate decreed that the words 'Sir Leslie Stephen, Honorary Doctor in Letters, sometime Fellow of Trinity Hall,' be inserted after the name of John Emerich Edward Baron Acton in the list of Benefactors contained in the Commemoration Service. This action of the University was due to the foundation of a Leslie Stephen Lecture by some of Stephen's friends, and I need hardly say that it does not imply any approval of Stephen's opinions. However, it is good to see Sir Leslie's name next Lord Acton's.

largely compiled from those memories which appeal to me most, as they stand out from the grey distance of bygone years, is dedicated with all affection and regard. Its incompleteness, as a portrait, must be manifest to all his friends—to none more so than to myself. I knew him for a man who never gave way to cynicism or bitterness, who never domineered over others, or uttered a word which might give pain to any one in his presence. There was no place for selfish or ungenerous thoughts in his pure, manly, and truly affectionate heart.[1]

[1] I wish to express an exceptional degree of gratitude to Dr. Morgan, for he wrote at a time when he was slowly recovering from a serious illness. I can only hope that his recovery was not impeded by this labour of love. In order to prevent mistake, I will add that it is not from him that I have obtained the passages that relate to Stephen's religious opinions.

IX.

JOURNALISM

[illegible]

The two following letters, separated from each other by a year, may serve by way of interlude between two acts in the life of their writer. They are given here at greater length because they seem to be the first by which the friendship that was begun in Lowell's house was drawn closer until it became an intimate bond.

Tremont Hall, Cambridge,
Jan. 1, 1862.

My dear Mr. Lowell,

This comes wishing you a happy New Year, and the same to your countrymen in general and many of them. I am just now in an inarticulate state — incapable of reading, speaking, thinking, or even smoking with satisfaction, owing to one of the most fearful colds that ever afflicted a human being. Christian resignation is all very well, but it is one of those good things you may have too much of, and it is rapidly getting to be rather a drug in the market with me. Meanwhile, I intend to expend the last remains of my intellect upon you, and, to prevent any cavils at the English climate as related to colds, and to confute the consequent glorification of your lumbering continent at the expense of our small but unparalleled island, I beg to observe that yesterday was the first genuinely frosty day we have had this year, that to-day I put on my skates the first time since Jan. 1862, and that not a week ago we were sitting on the grass basking in the sun (this last statement is in a manner poetical), also that I haven't seen or heard of a flake of snow

as big as a cent. Think of that you miserable snowed-up mortals in Massachusetts, and next time you begin to malign our delicious mists, let your conscience ask you how about your frosts and ice. Latitude of Florence, indeed!

I very often think of you for many reasons. First of all, I am not an utterly ungrateful and insensible brute. Secondly, your portrait is regarding me with an unnaturally mild and benevolent expression. Thirdly, I am come to be a great authority on America in these parts. I can actually bear testimony that you are human beings (more or less), that you smoke like Christians, and behave in all respects with somewhat more resemblance, externally, to the English race than might have been expected. Moreover, as the one-eyed is king among the blind, my three months in the U.S. is regarded as an unlimited fund of experience, to which my weaker brethren reverentially appeal. It is true that I was terribly humiliated by the apparition of an Oxford man of somewhat 'secesh' tendencies, who has been eight months in America. But, he having withdrawn, I have again become a great authority and lay down the law about all matters connected with the other side of the Atlantic in a way that would give you a certain fiendish amusement if you could hear it. The result, however, is that reflection has convinced me that I want to pay another visit to Uncle Sam, to make my imposition a little less barefaced. Consequently I am constantly planning how and when to get back. I fear that a certain lack of coin will detain me for the next year or so, as well as an intense desire to go to the Alps next summer. They have chosen me Vice-President of the Alpine Club, a dignity which I desire to illustrate by ascending certain peaks hitherto untrodden or perishing in the attempt. Finally and lastly, I sometimes think of Cambridge, Mass., by force of contrast. I have been in a state of eating and drinking for the last fortnight (which, by the way, has not a little contributed to the aforesaid cold) after a fashion peculiar, I should guess, to Cambridge here. We, in the first place, exclude rigidly the female sex, so that I have not spoken to a lady for three weeks. We used to dine at 2 and have

supper at 9 in old times. The progress of civilisation has pushed our dinner on to 6, but, as a conservative generation, we can't give up supper. Consequently, after a very extensive dinner at 6, we are expected to eat the time-honoured dishes of oysters, boar's head and game-pie, washed down by milk-punch at 10.30—an operation of a truly fearful nature to any one whose stomach is of the ordinary constitution and who is incapable of resisting temptation. I fear you would, on the sight thereof, give heaven thanks you are not as one of these gluttonous Englishmen ; but you must consider the sentiment of the thing. The fact is, that Christmas means eating and drinking, and we eat and drink in a truly religious spirit of devotion to the season.

Since my return [from America] I have been very busy, partly in making up arrears of neglected business (I hope some day to be not more than a fortnight behind time), and partly in securing the election to a professorship of political economy of my blind friend Fawcett, whom, I think, I mentioned to you. As the electors were the resident M.A.'s, who are almost *ex officio* Conservatives and High Churchmen, and as my friend had the reputation of being an infidel Radical, this wanted skill. However, I did it, or, at least, humbly assisted in it, and very nearly got drunk on the occasion. . . .

Ever yours truly,

LESLIE STEPHEN.

19 PORCHESTER SQUARE, LONDON,
Jan. 13, 1865.

MY DEAR MR. LOWELL,

I don't know whether you remember the existence of the wandering Englishman, whom you treated so kindly a year and a half ago. I hope, at any rate, that you do not object to be reminded thereof : on which speculation I venture to write and wish you a happy New Year and a speedy end to the rebellion. You will observe that I have not forgotten all the lessons I learnt on the other side of the water, or I should have used a more complimentary term to describe

Jeff. Davis's pursuits. We had a large party at Cambridge to keep Christmas . . . and many vigorous contests came off *à propos* of Sherman's march. Just at the end of the week came the news of the taking of Savannah, which gave our side all the best of the chaff. As it was the popular impression amongst readers of the *Times* that the march through Georgia was a second edition of the ditto from Moscow, they were naturally taken aback, and I had the satisfaction of sending an elderly Tory into such a fury that he declared he would rather have heard of the British Guards being annihilated by the French (most good Tories would think such a catastrophe decidedly worse than damnation) than hear of a defeat of the South. He added that we were all going to the dogs in consequence of that damned Reform Bill, and that Free Trade had introduced nothing but the foot-rot in sheep. Whereupon I smoked the pipe of peace, and, said I, next to chaffing an enemy, it is pleasant to congratulate a friend, so I will write a line to Mr. Lowell and express my satisfaction at this and the other good news. . . .

I am writing, as you may observe, from London. I have just torn myself up by the roots from Cambridge and am sitting in a room amongst piles of books, pictures, and other lumber in a perfectly chaotic state. To this I am forced by the fact that, the business of a parson having become odious to me, they won't let me teach mathematics any longer, or, to speak more truly, it does not answer to wait at Cambridge unless you can accept the prize of a college living—the bait which attracts most lecturers. As in this devout country we stick to the maxim, 'once a parson, always a parson,' I could not, even if I wished it, go in for law.[1] Accordingly I am driven to the occupation of penny-a-lining. I find that I can pick up a pretty good living by writing for the papers, and like the work so far. Meanwhile, it is rather an effort to turn out of a warm, easy place like Cambridge, where I had been vegetating for near fifteen years in comfort. I had a luxurious set of rooms. I walked about in a gorgeous cap and gown, and every one that I met took off their hats to

[1] That, as will appear below, was not so certain as Stephen thought it.

me. Now in London I find that people don't instinctively recognise me. I can walk down the Strand without causing any visible sensation. The change is, I believe, good for me, because an English university is only too pleasant a place for a bachelor. You live on free and easy terms with a great number of men—all rather above the average in education—and there is no place, in England at any rate, where you can express any opinions or occupy yourself in any way with more perfect freedom. The *odium theologicum*, though it exists at Oxford, has almost perished out of Cambridge. One of our fellows wrote a book the other day to prove, under a very thin veil, that Christianity was a degenerate kind of Gnosticism.[1] Nobody has taken any notice of it, and, if he does not insult people's feelings, nobody will. For this, and many other reasons, I was fond of the university. But it is also a lazy sort of place for men who, like me, had no share in the teaching, and therefore I have come to a more stimulating atmosphere. I am living here with my mother and sister and doing a good deal of scribbling. . . .

I begin to plan another expedition to America. When it will come off must depend on various circumstances; amongst others, which I will only hint at, the condition of my purse. Meanwhile, don't be astonished if some fine day, a few months hence, you see a long and attenuated Englishman, thinner even than his American cousins, smoking a pipe somewhere between Boston and Cambridge with a sort of expression of being quite at home. . . .

Believe me, my dear Mr. Lowell,
Ever yours truly,
LESLIE STEPHEN.

Though in the last of these letters Stephen says that he is doing 'a good deal of scribbling,' he was still trembling on the brink of journalism or had but one foot within the stream. It may be gathered from Lady Stephen's journal that only at Christmas-time had he finally made up his mind to 'tear himself up by the roots' from Cambridge and to make his home

[1] 'The Gnostics and their Remains,' by C. W. King, 1864.

with his mother and sister in Porchester Square. On January 26, 1865, he wrote as follows in a note-book: 'For these reasons [we have seen them above][1] I came up to town. There I was received in a flattering manner by the *Saturday Review*, for which I am still writing. I had a second offer of taking the editorship of the *Reader;* but declined on the ground that, on the whole, I preferred writing to joining in rather a doubtful speculation for which I had no particular qualification. [John Douglas] Cook [the editor of the *Saturday*] was asked by [my brother] J. F. S. what he thought of me, and gave such a flattering answer that I resolved to stick to him instead of the *Reader*. . . . At present [this writing for periodicals] is very interesting to me, and, I think, it will continue so. It is good practice and keeps me awake to things going on around me.' Exactly when Stephen's first article appeared in the *Saturday* I cannot say, but I think that before this date his contributions had been few, and I am told that he had been far from confident of finding favour in the eyes of the famous editor. He entered the world of journalism with one great advantage, which might be called adventitious. For nearly ten years his brother had been passing a large part of his energetic existence in that sphere, and, if he could be called a rising lawyer, might already be called a risen journalist. Since the foundation of the *Saturday*, late in 1855, when Leslie was being ordained, Fitzjames had been writing for that paper. He was on the point of giving his powerful aid to the new *Pall Mall Gazette*, of which George Smith was the proprietor and Mr. Greenwood was the editor. He had contributed to *Fraser* and the *Cornhill* and the *Edinburgh*. He had published his 'Essays by a Barrister' and his 'General View of the Criminal Law.' In short he could show a great deal, while his younger brother could show next to nothing. It is not a little remarkable that Leslie should have hesitated so long when he had so encouraging an example before him. But he rated his brother's powers very high and his own very low.

However, his rise was rapid, and old friends at Cambridge were soon telling stories of the income that he was making by

[1] *See* above, p. 144.

his pen. He started with the *Saturday Review*. He had hardly been a month in London before the *Pall Mall Gazette* was founded (February 7, 1865), and its second number contained an article that he had written. In the next year he became a regular contributor to the (New York) *Nation*. I shall not attempt to describe the *Saturday* and the *Pall Mall* of those days; in more than one place Leslie himself has said something about them.[1] As memoirs are published, it becomes always more evident that any one who never wrote for the *Saturday* was no one. But Leslie was a steady contributor of two articles a week, and the editor was glad to get all that he could from him. 'I remember,' said Stephen in his old age, 'my wife's pleasure when the editor of the *Saturday* gave me a sort of retaining-fee of fifty guineas a year, by way, as he said, of wedding present.' This must have been in 1867. As to the editor of the *Pall Mall*, he has spoken, and spoken so directly to the point, that I venture to transcribe part of an article that Mr. Frederick Greenwood sent to the *Pilot* when Sir Leslie died.[2] 'Like many others, Stephen found his way to literature as a profession through journalism; at that time a more inviting pursuit to the man who wished to make his voice heard than ever it was before, and far more certainly than it has since become. . . . As a writer in those days, his humour was his predominant characteristic: humour with just enough bite in it at all times, and, for the rest, keen, buoyant, illuminating, and apparently as effortless as the springing of a fountain. . . . I believe myself able to say that even in that good time for journalism there was no more welcome "contributor" than Leslie Stephen. He was never more disappointing than coin of the realm. The sensation of the editor when he broke open an envelope and caught a glimpse of Stephen's neat, small handwriting in the customary long lines was as that of the man who spies a bright bank-note. The one regret was that he did not write often enough, and that he ceased to be a contributor so soon.'

Here we might stop if we only wanted to know whether as

[1] 'Life of Sir J. F. Stephen,' pp. 148, 212; 'Early Impressions,' *National Review*, Nov. 1903.

[2] *The Pilot*, Feb. 27, 1904.

a journalist Stephen was worth his pay, but there are other words in Mr. Greenwood's article which I needs must copy. 'Love is a word which certain rugged but intelligible prejudices are always at hand to suppress when men speak of men; but it so happened that, though Leslie Stephen chose to live a life of comparative retirement, though he had a sufficient share of a strong family dislike of being considered "a man of feeling," none of his friends were able to stop at friendship for him: the sentiment went straightway on to affection.' That I believe to be true. Between mere acquaintance and friendship there was a barrier to be encountered: 'but none of his friends were able to stop at friendship for him.'

Howbeit, at the moment we are speaking of journalism. Before he had been a year at his new pursuit, he published in the *Pall Mall*, and then as his first book—for Berlepsch's 'Alps' we can hardly reckon to be his—those 'Sketches from Cambridge, by a Don,' which, as we have seen, were denounced from the university pulpit in the year 1900. It is not, I suppose, to be denied that they were, as Stephen said, the work of a 'pert young journalist'; but there are dons at Cambridge to whom they are still delightful, and very seriously I would say that to the student of the Victorian age they will be a valuable document: not the less instructive because it happens to be amusing.[1] I am told, however, that Stephen soon regretted some part of what he had done since certain of his sketches were portraits drawn from life. 'Stephen,' says one who knew him then, 'as was usual with him, thought that he had been much more to blame than he was. He argued that where a friend had without suspicion permitted you to view his little weaknesses, you had no right to make money by publicly exhibiting him in a ridiculous light.' I do not defend him against himself; but he had written no spiteful or ill-tempered word, and, at all events, those who look at this book will easily understand Mr. Greenwood's estimate of his new recruit.

Sufficient for the daily is the day thereof, and for the weekly the week thereof. Stephen would not have wished me or

[1] *See* the testimony of Mr. Herbert Paul in the Introduction (p. xxxviii) to the American edition (1905) of 'Free-thinking.'

others to hunt in old newspapers for what he called his subterranean work. An extract from a letter to Lowell, written in 1869, may illustrate more than one point.

> (July 25, 1869.) I am plodding on very inconspicuously and very happily. . . . You make me ashamed by saying that you looked out for articles of mine in the *Saturday*. I will tell you what I ordinarily do, that you may not waste more time in that way. I write two articles weekly : one a review of a book, and one a 'middle,' *i.e.*, an article which comes between the political leaders and the reviews. They are generally on some such subject as Poor Law Amendment, National Antipathies, Parisian Criminals, Emigration, Pauperism, Dinner Giving, Contagious Diseases, the Redundancy of Women, &c. &c. I give you the last few titles at random. I never, or very seldom, write about America directly, because I disapprove of the whole politics of the *Saturday* and of the *Pall Mall* (for which I write occasionally) on that and on most other points. The fact is, that my opinions are not very saleable amongst the classes which buy the *Saturday*, and I only give them vent occasionally. Whenever I write anything of which I am not ashamed—in a literary sense (for morally I am indifferent honest)—I will let you know.

Two years later he tells Lowell how in seven weeks he has written in the *Saturday* on Ruskin's 'Fors Clavigera,' [James Payn's] 'Like Father, like Son,' London Pauperism, [J. W. Kaye's] 'Essays of an Optimist,' Our Christian Civilisation [bombardment of Paris], 'The Luck of Roaring Camp,' Smallpox, Volunteers and Demonstrations, [Edmund Yates's] 'Dr. Wainwright's Patient,' The *Times* and the Terms of Peace, Arthur Tappan [Life of an American Abolitionist], Government and Vaccination, and Hutton's 'Essays' ; also his article on Balzac's Novels has appeared in the *Fortnightly*. 'Enough,' he says, 'in all conscience!' We will only note in passing that 'The Luck of Roaring Camp' was heartily praised ; that the friendship between Stephen and Payn was not cemented by

flattery; and that of the theological portion of Hutton's 'Essays' it is not for Stephen to speak in the pages of the *Saturday*.

It will be seen that he did not avoid political themes, or, at any rate, themes that may be called more or less political. If he wrote of 'Dinner Giving,' he wrote also of 'Poor Law Amendment,' and if he refrained from politics in the narrowest sense of that term—the party questions of the hour—that was not because he had no opinions about them, but because he had decidedly different opinions from those that were being advocated by the journals to which he contributed.

The newspaper in which he can be seen, I will not say at his best, but at his freest, is the *Nation*. That journal was founded in 1865, and from October 1866 to July 1873 Stephen sent a fortnightly letter upon English affairs.[1] During his holidays he was relieved by his brother, and any one who had studied their styles, tastes, and opinions would have no great difficulty in picking out Fitzjames's articles. Leslie deals with a great variety of affairs, including politics. At this time he was attending Parliament on the occasion of important debates. He has heard Derby and Disraeli, Gladstone, Bright, and Mill. He tells not only what they said but how they said it. Disraeli, for example, has a beautiful voice, but he hums and haws and mouths his sentences and gesticulates after an artificial and theatrical fashion. On one occasion Mr. Gladstone 'trembles with passion.' The outward man of John Mill is sketched more vividly than the historian of the English Utilitarians could sketch it in later days; indeed, I think that he might well have consulted his long-forgotten letters to the *Nation*. And the English correspondent of that journal had opinions of his own. If he was a 'thoughtful Liberal' he was also an advanced Radical. 'We shall have an era of excitement very unlike the quiet indifference of the Palmerstonian era; and, if no unexpected contingencies occur, I think we may have sanguine hopes that the fermentation will end before long in producing a far better social and political state of things than

[1] The editor of the *Nation*, Mr. Wendell P. Garrison, has been kind enough to send me a list of these articles.

we have lately enjoyed' (1868). 'I am inclined to think myself that if we could get rid of the monarchy without a hard fight, we should be better for the change; but we must not be mean about money, and let us not pluck the fruit before it is ripe' (1871). In 1903 Sir Leslie Stephen, K.C.B., was not very contrite. '"Men should no more be ashamed of having been Republicans in their youth," said Southey, "than of having had the measles." Rather, one could say, a man should be ashamed of not having felt in his youth the generous impulses which make him sympathise with whatever appears to be the cause of progress.'[1] Those generous impulses were felt by the English correspondent of the *Nation*.

A good deal is written of religious matters, of Maurice and Stanley, of Ritualists and Positivists, and it were needless to say that what is written is 'advanced.' One difference between the Stephen brothers is marked by their different treatment of Positivism. Fitzjames is merely scornful; Leslie sees the absurd side but is sympathetic. 'There are perhaps not more than half a dozen genuine disciples prepared to go all lengths; and it has been said that half of them are suspected of heresy. This statement, however, gives a very inadequate impression of the extent to which their characteristic theories have leavened the thoughts of the rising generation' (1869). Of literature less is said than might be expected by those who would reconstruct Stephen from his books. The book of the hour is noticed; but our English correspondent seems to be glad if the book of the hour is something solid, like Lecky's 'Rationalism.' And there are some characteristic outbursts. The recovery from illness of the Prince of Wales produced a display of flunkeyism which turned the writer's stomach. When Lord Bute is married, he sees 'a fine, unadulterated snobbishness in certain social strata' which suggests the wish that 'some thousand persons were so united that a single kick could do summary and simultaneous justice to all.'

To us, however, the most interesting passage will, perhaps, be the following, for it explains Stephen's relation to the English journals. 'Now for good or evil such papers as the

[1] *National Review*, Oct. 1903, p. 218.

Times, the *Saturday Review*, and the *Pall Mall Gazette* write for a class of society which is full of these thoroughly contented people. There is often a curious contrast between the writers in these papers and the opinions expressed, which I hasten to add is not due to any actual dishonesty of the writers, though perhaps a stern moralist may consider them in some degree compromised. I should guess, though I could not prove, that a decided majority of the writers in the *Saturday Review* were in favour of the Northern States during the late struggle ; I am still more certain that a large majority of them incline to extremely liberal theological principles. But, of course, neither Northern sympathies nor free-thinking theology would pay with the upper classes in England. Consequently such questions are committed to those writers whose way of thinking happens to coincide with what is popular in the highest social state [stratum ?]. The *Saturday Review* has another special cause of weakness in theological questions. Mr. Beresford Hope, the chief proprietor, is an extreme High Churchman ; and as few intelligent men, and therefore few *Saturday* reviewers, agree with him in this matter, the result is to neutralise the paper entirely. It sometimes sneers at the Evangelical party and frequently sneers at religious belief generally, though in terms sufficiently covert to deceive the ordinary British public ; but in most church matters it preserves an exceptional silence.' And again Stephen says in another place that, many of the contributors to these papers hold a form of creed which would generally be called infidel. 'They throw a decent veil over it, it is true, but it is not the less obvious to any one who will read between the lines.' Indeed, both in his epistles to the 'Yankees,' and in private letters, he so often recurs to the divergence between the opinions of journals and the opinions of journalists as to suggest that he is not quite happy in helping indirectly to disseminate doctrines that are not his own. How this matter presented itself to him in his old age he has told in his 'Early Impressions.'[1] He then said that he was 'impenitent,' and I cannot think that he had any cause for remorse ; in truth, I believe that in at least one quarter he was regarded as

[1] *National Review*, Nov. 1903, p. 431.

a singularly scrupulous, if not quixotic, contributor. However, when in 1894 he was writing his brother's Life, and looked back at the files of the *Saturday*, he was surprised to find that, though he could distinguish his brother's articles, he could rarely distinguish his own by merely reading them. Stephen brought from Cambridge a considerable body of opinions, but he also brought a flexible mode of expression. He could at this time easily catch the 'tone' of a paper or magazine, and any one who wished to find his articles would have to attend rather to substance than to style.

The following letter to the proprietor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* sufficiently suggests that Stephen could not hold one set of opinions as man and another as journalist, though the occasion of this outbreak I cannot explain.

16 Onslow Gardens,
Nov. 19 [1867].

My dear Smith,

I have no doubt that you and my brother acted out of sincere kindness to me, and therefore I don't in the least complain. Still I must say that I signed my name expressly because I want my friends to understand that I utterly disagree with my brother on the points in question. As they know that I sometimes write in the *P.M.G.*, they may fancy that I agree in that part of its politics. Of course, I did not mean my letter to be insulting or in any way personal; if I had any personal quarrel with my brother, I should not write to the papers about it; but on certain political matters I not only disapprove of his views, but should be glad that my disapproval should be known to the few people who care about it one way or the other. However, the matter is not worth writing about, and I will only add that the article made me feel extremely indignant and may have caused me to write too warmly. I can't yet say that I regret it.

Many thanks for your kind invitation to Brighton, which, I am very happy to say, we can now accept. . . .

Ever yours truly,
L. Stephen.

With writing for dailies and weeklies Stephen was not content. In 1866 he began his long tale of contributions to the *Cornhill*. His first essay was on 'American Humour,' and his second on 'A Tour in Transylvania.' Soon afterwards appeared 'Richardson' and 'Defoe' and a series of papers signed by 'A Cynic.' As in a previous chapter we have heard Stephen's answer to a charge of cynicism, we must admit that, the world being what it is, he was imprudent in his choice of a signature, and not the less so because to that signature he could not live up, or rather live down. The true state of the case has, I think, been well put by Mr. Frederic Harrison.[1]

'Throughout the year 1869 the magazine was constantly occupied with the papers of "A Cynic." "The Cynic's Apology" opened in May 1869. Then came "Idolatry," "Useless Knowledge," "The Decay of Murder," "National Antipathies," "The Uses of Fools," "Social Slavery," and many others. He closed the "Cynic" series on becoming editor, and, I think, did not re-issue them. He was right. They were full of Stephen's genius of common sense, his quaint humour, his dislike for extravagance, his disgust for false sentiment and artificial gush; but they are not his best and do not reflect his higher thought. Leslie was no cynic, he had no love for cynics; he thoroughly saw of what affectation and egoism professed cynicism is manufactured. Leslie was closer to Thackeray and Lowell than to Swift. He had a deep vein of sentiment and enthusiasm which he kept battened down in the hold.' It might be added that this cynic, while fully alive to the fact that there is much brutality in human nature, showed more compassion for the weak than was in keeping with the character that he had assumed. He had not histrionic power enough to become a good stage cynic, and in some of the qualities that go to make the cynic of real life he was miserably deficient.

His own thoughts about this matter are best expressed in his essay on Thackeray—an essay which is not so well known as we might wish it to be.[2] It ends with some words with which

[1] *Cornhill*, April 1904, p. 442.

[2] It is to be found at the end of the costly edition of Thackeray's works, published by Smith and Elder in 1879, and at the end of the 'new and

I might be well content to finish my memoir of their writer. 'I can only hope that in whatever else I may have come short, I have not failed to show that his admirers honoured in him—as I think they were not deceived in recognising—a nature full of tender emotion, of reverence for all simplicity and true nobility of character, and of unflinching resolution to see facts as they really are. So much is implied; and such qualities may justify an affectionate pride in the man, whatever estimate we may accept of the literary genius of the writer.' And there is one other sentence that must be copied; it is concerned with the 'cynicism' which some have found in Thackeray's books. 'In short his writings mean, if they mean anything, that the love of a wife and child and friend is the one sacred element in our nature, of infinitely higher price than anything that can come in competition with it; and that Vanity Fair is what it is precisely because it stimulates the pursuit of objects frivolous and unsatisfying just so far as they imply indifference to these emotions.'[1] In passing we might note that these words give us what for practical purposes is the sum and substance of Stephen's 'Science of Ethics': his deepest conviction and the ever-growing core of his experience. But the same words suggest another remark. Stephen was a Thackerayan. Just how much of the quality that we thus indicate was inborn, and just how much was due to a consumption of the great novels as they came from the press—'Vanity Fair' was, we remember, the first book that he bought with his own money—these would be questions difficult to answer. Moreover, the marriage of which we shall speak in the next chapter strengthened the bond and at the same time made it impossible for Stephen to express in public all or nearly all the admiration that he felt for Thackeray as a writer and as a man. He would have been angry had he thought that I should place his name beside a name that he greatly reverenced so as to suggest more than what plenty of critics have seen, namely, that he was a confirmed Thackerayan; only it seems to me that in this matter

cheaper edition' of 1878–9. Our quotation is from vol. xxiv. p. 378 of this cheaper edition.

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 362.

of 'cynicism' the two writers stand and fall together. I will not say that when Stephen came out of Cambridge 'an unflinching desire to see facts as they really are' would never have been too flattering a description of something that can be found in his essays—that 'bite' of which Mr. Greenwood has spoken. There may be a little too much display—though often it is humorous—of a hard-headed common sense that detects humbug and imposture and sentimentalism in many quarters. On the possession of this quality Cambridge men, especially the Cambridge men whom Stephen knew best, were wont to pride themselves, and Stephen's ink was never watery. Before he had been long in London, he knew and admired Matthew Arnold, placed him very high among English critics and high among English poets. Some of Arnold's verses 'hummed themselves in his head' almost as persistently as Fitzgerald's. More than once, however, Stephen said in print that 'Philistine' is the name which a prig gives to the rest of mankind. Had the human race really been divisible in that simple manner, Stephen in his Cambridge days would, I think, have unhesitatingly chosen to be a Philistine. But he spoke of all this long afterwards in his happiest vein and I must neither quote nor spoil.[1]

As for literary criticism—something more ambitious, I mean, than judgments on new books pronounced in weekly papers—Stephen was in no hurry to begin. Long afterwards he said that he had 'stumbled into criticism,' and to those who are better qualified than I am to analyse the quality of his work, I would submit that his readers feel, and are pleased when they feel, that he is in some sort a diffident and reluctant critic. He has never said 'Go to, a critic I will be after the order of the great So-and-so'; but, thinking over some of the books that he has enjoyed, it occurs to him that possibly he can bring out some merits and defects which may not have struck everybody. That was, I believe, Stephen's feeling when he first began to write about Richardson and Defoe and other masters. In his letters he rarely mentions work of this kind, even when he is

[1] *See* the lecture on Arnold (1893) in 'Studies of a Biographer,' ii. 76. 'We who were young radicals . . . tried to retort by calling him a mere dandy, a kid-gloved Oxford coxcomb . . .' (p. 104).

writing to the encouraging Lowell. Not that he did it as drudgery; but he was by no means sure that he could do it well or that it much wanted doing.

For articles of a heavier calibre than any that have yet been mentioned the pages of *Fraser* were open. Froude was then the editor; Fitzjames Stephen was a friend of Froude's, and I believe that within a couple of years after leaving Cambridge Leslie became a frequent contributor to *Fraser*. He sent to it a couple of his Alpine essays,[1] and he sent to it also a good many essays of an anti-theological or anti-ecclesiastical kind. The first of them that he thought worthy of being reprinted—'The Broad Church'—was not published until 1870. His hand is visible at an earlier time; but other men were writing for Froude's magazine in much the same free-thinking sense, and we will make no endeavour to disinter what he was content to leave underground.[2] From 1870 onwards the *Fortnightly Review*, which was edited by his friend Mr. Morley, was another outlet.

As to politics in what might be called the higher sense of the term, they were to be his serious study. He sat himself down in London with two schemes in his head. Ultimately there was to be a *magnum opus* (he sometimes alludes to it as such) on political philosophy, for the production of which a long course of reading was planned. But first there was an essay on the United States to be written. I gather that, had it been written, we might now be saying that it stood between

[1] 'The Baths of Santa Catarina,' Nov. 1869; 'The Alps in the Last Century,' Aug. 1870.

[2] The reprinted articles of this character are: 'The Broad Church,' March 1870; 'Religion as a Fine Art,' Feb. 1872; 'Darwinism and Divinity,' April 1872; 'A Bad Five Minutes in the Alps,' Nov. 1872; 'Shaftesbury,' Jan. 1873; 'The Fable of the Bees,' June 1873; 'Jonathan Edwards,' Nov. 1873. We may ascribe to him likewise the four articles on University Reform, mentioned above, p. 77. The following also are his: 'The Comtist Utopia,' July 1869; 'Dr. Pusey and Dr. Temple,' Dec. 1869; 'The Religious Difficulty' [Education Act], May 1870; 'Mr. Matthew Arnold and the Church of England' (signed), Oct. 1870; 'Mr. Voysey and Mr. Purchas,' April 1871; 'Mr. Morley's Voltaire' (L. S.), June 1872. About some articles of 1866–9 I will not make conjectures. A signed article on 'Ritualism' appeared in *Macmillan*, April 1868.

Tocqueville ('a writer whom I admire beyond any other') and Bryce. In passing I may notice a letter of 1870, in which Stephen introduces to Lowell 'one of my very best friends,' Mr. Bryce, who is going to visit the United States this summer. Stephen's own book about America soon disappeared from his programme. He was abandoning it in November 1865, having decided that he could not afford a sufficiently lengthy stay in the United States. We have seen how in the same year he discharged his broadside at the *Times*. In the next year he contributed a paper to a volume of 'Essays on Reform,' which volume, published in 1867, might, I suppose, be described as a manifesto of Young Liberalism.[1] The point of Stephen's own essay was that, such was the difference between the two countries, that, even if democracy had produced some ugly results in America, it need not have a similar effect in England. 'I remember,' he sadly said in 1895, 'that it appeared to me to be very good. I have not looked at it for years.' As to the *magnum opus*, it seems gradually to shuffle off its specifically political character and to become various books that we know. However, Stephen, in 1865, proposed to give his evenings—long evenings—to serious reading, pen in hand. And serious the reading was, as note-books, full of stenographic symbols, sufficiently testify. He tackled Spinoza and he tackled Hegel, though some 'long-hand' words, rising like rocks out of a surrounding mist, suggest that Hegel was not allowed to try his patience long. ('In short, Hegel is in many things little better than an ass.') Comte and Strauss and Renan seem more attractive, and the annotator's projects become less distinctly political. They tend towards the history of thought: especially towards the history of religious thought in modern times. To Comte, in particular, he paid close attention. Long afterwards he said that, had he been at Oxford, he might have been a Positivist. It may be so; but to speculate about what Leslie Stephen would have been had he not been at Cambridge would

[1] 'Essays on Reform,' Macmillan, 1867. The other essayists were G. C. Brodrick, R. H. Hutton, Lord Houghton, A. V. Dicey, J. B. Kinnear, B. Cracroft, C. H. Pearson, Goldwin Smith, James Bryce, A. O. Rutson, Sir George Young.

be like speculating about a Matthew Arnold who had not been at Oxford.

How uncertain was his prospect of making a livelihood by journalism is shown by the fact that on May 27, 1867—on the eve, that is, of his marriage—he was admitted as a student at the Inner Temple and proceeded to eat some dinners. When he left Cambridge at the end of 1864 he believed that, being a clerk in holy orders, he was precluded from what he used to call the hereditary profession of the Stephens. It will be remembered that until the passing of the Clerical Disabilities Act in 1870, nothing that a clergyman could do of his own free will would divest him of the rights and disabilities annexed by law to his clerical status, and ever since the days of Horne Tooke it had been a common opinion that a clergyman could not become a barrister. However, just at this moment, owing to the occurrence of other cases similar to Stephen's, the question was being explored, and at a meeting of delegates from the four Inns it was resolved by a majority of one that there was no legal objection to the 'call' of a clergyman. Then the Inns, Lincoln Inn leading the way, began to open their doors.[1] Stephen let a couple of years go by before he nominally became a student of law, and the step that he then took was taken at the instance of friends who were anxious about his future. He only kept two terms, so it seems, and in 1875 he removed his name from the books of the Inn. He showed some interest in the passing of the Act of 1870. In February of that year he wrote thus to his sister-in-law, now Lady Stephen, in India: 'I have been to a committee to-day to arrange a Bill for enabling me to get rid of the last rags of my parsonhood, and, from what I hear, I think it probable that the next time you see me no one will have a right to call me "reverend." It is possible also that they may be able to put "M.P." after my name; but that I do not exactly expect. So I don't suppose

[1] The facts will be found in 'Once a Clergyman, always a Clergyman: a Letter to the Bishop of London,' by Frederick Waymouth Gibbs, C.B., 1865. Mr. Gibbs had been brought up in the family of Sir James Stephen, and the relationship between him and Sir James's sons was almost fraternal. The letter was reviewed in *Fraser* for May 1865.

that there will be any outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual change. Certainly if I am still crawling about on this contemptible planet, I shall not have changed in my feelings to the people I love best in the world.' In April he wrote : 'You and [my brother] amuse me by talking seriously about my being in Parliament, to which I have only to say that I have not the faintest wish ever to commit such a folly. I am tolerably content with my own line of life and shall stick to it ; but the making of speeches and all the wretched bother of politics is not in the least to my mind—to say nothing of obvious considerations of the pecuniary kind.' The enthusiastic radicalism had been rapidly cooling ; but if the Act of 1870 had been passed some six years earlier, I do not feel sure that Stephen would not have shared the ambition of those who at that time were his closest friends. As a matter of fact, when the Act was passed, Stephen was in no haste to accept the proffered relief, and why he was at pains to do so at all I do not know, for almost the only practical result of his action was to subject him to the duty of serving as a juror. However, by a deed dated March 23, 1875, he relinquished, so far as in him lay, 'all rights, privileges, advantages and exemptions' incidental to the office of a priest of the Church of England. That of his truly sacerdotal powers (if any) he could not deprive himself is, according to some canonists, the better opinion, and it occasionally amused him. The witness to that deed, Mr. Thomas Hardy, we shall hear by-and-by.

During his first years in London various friends held out a helping hand to Stephen. A proof-sheet of part of the *Alpine Journal* for 1896 lies before me. It contains a brief memoir that Stephen wrote of his friend John Ormsby. It contains also a few sentences devoted to the memory of Philip Henry Lawrence, of whom it might, I suppose, be said that he did more than any other man for the preservation of commons and open spaces. On this sheet Stephen has made a note: 'P. H. Lawrence, too, was a very good friend of mine. I did not write this notice. I met him first at Grindelwald about 1860. He afterwards came to see me at Cambridge and became a friend of Fawcett. He started the Commons

Preservation business, and really both designed it and ran the concern for its first two or three years. I was the first secretary, Lawrence having got me appointed when I left Cambridge under the impression that it might help me to something ; but I was quite incompetent and soon gave it up.' It was fit and proper that the future founder of the Sunday Tramps should be officially connected with the initiation of the beneficent movement of which in his 'Life of Fawcett,' he, without saying a word of that connexion, became the historian ; but the note scribbled upon the proof-sheet has been cited here because of the words 'under the impression that it might help me to something.' I do not think that Stephen had anything to complain of when once he had made his start as a 'literary gent' ; but journalism is a precarious means of subsistence, more especially if some thought of a *magnum opus* is at the back of the journalist's mind. To this may be added that, though there was nothing that should be called persecution, the man who had not yet been able to get rid of 'the last rags of his parsonhood,' but never concealed the fact that he regarded them as rags, was, as might be expected, received with cold looks in certain respectable circles.

Having told these few facts, we shall be able to allow Stephen to speak for himself in his letters, and this chapter may end, as it began, with a letter to Lowell, which, however, demands a short explanation. In 1866 Mr. Henry Yates Thompson proposed to endow a lectureship. The lecturer was to be appointed by the President and Fellows of Harvard, but was to instruct the English Cambridge in 'the History, Literature, and Institutions of the United States of America.' This generous offer the Cambridge Senate rejected. The question on which a vote was taken was whether by way of experiment a lecturer to be nominated by Harvard and approved by the Vice-Chancellor should be allowed the use of one of the University rooms for a single course of lectures. By 110 votes to 82 the Senate decided that it would not make even this tentative approach towards an acceptance of Mr. Thompson's proposal. It will probably be thought by modern readers that when Stephen told Lowell that a cry of 'Socinianism !' was

raised, this was a joke. It was nothing of the kind. Printed papers now lying before me show that the drum ecclesiastic was resoundingly beaten. 'Are members of the Senate aware,' wrote one of the drummers, 'that Harvard University, as far as it professes any form of religion, is distinctly Socinian, or if Americans prefer the term, Unitarian?' Another gentleman thought good to say in print that by receiving a lecturer from Harvard we should 'pander to that which is perhaps the worst vice inherent in the North-American character, namely, SELF-CONCEIT.'[1] Such were the amenities of the time; such was the use made of capital letters; and such the wisdom of the Senate. It had been believed and hoped at Cambridge, so I am told, that if Harvard had to appoint a Thompson lecturer the choice would fall in the first instance upon Lowell. 'As for Socinianism,' wrote Lowell to Stephen in reply to the following letter, 'heavens! we've got several centuries ahead of *that*, some of us, or behind it, if you please.'

LONDON,
Feb. 23, 1866.

MY DEAR MR. LOWELL,—

I went down to Cambridge yesterday to vote about the international lectureship which Thompson proposed to found for our benefit. I was very much vexed at its rejection and think that you may possibly care to hear something about it. The voting body—our Senate—consists of every one who has taken the degree of M.A. . . . Directly I went into the Senate House yesterday I saw at a glance that we were done for. The district round Cambridge is generally supplied with parsons from the University, who can be brought up when the Church is in danger. Beings whom I recognised at once by their rustic appearance, ancient and shiny silk gowns, elaborate white ties and shabby hats instead of college caps, were swarming all around me. The sons of Zeruiah were too many for us. A very ridiculous character,

[1] The Registrary of the University, Mr. J. W. Clark, has allowed me to consult a collection that he made of the papers ('fly-sheets') which were issued in the course of this controversy.

named X., was, at first, the only man who objected to the proposal. . . . But he collected certain orthodox friends. They began by bemoaning themselves about democracy without much effect, when one of them luckily discovered for the first time that you were Socinians, and that effectually did the business. Every intelligent man in the place voted for the professorship, including even Kingsley, who was very energetic about it, though he has been unsound upon America generally ; but when once the Church is having its foundations sapped, and that by an American democrat, it would be easier to argue with a herd of swine than British parsons. I am sorry for it, because it shows that in Cambridge the Liberal party is weaker than I thought, and because it looks, and in fact is, a very ungracious proceeding. I only hope the more that we shall be able gradually to get the University out of its connexion with the established Church ; but we have a long piece of work to do first.

I hope you received a little book about Cambridge, which I sent you last summer ; but I fear from misfortunes which beset another copy sent to America that it probably never reached you. I hope, however, to repair the omission by bringing a copy this summer in person. I shall get a holiday in the long vacation and mean to take another trip to America. I have nearly exhausted the Alps for the present. The last inaccessible mountain [the Matterhorn] has been climbed, and the accident which took place on the occasion will prevent my attacking it for the present—not that it is particularly dangerous, but that the guides would probably be particularly nervous. So I shall leave the mountains to themselves for a little and come over to see America in peace. There are several things which I am anxious to see, and which I had not time to examine when I was there before, as, for example, French Canada ; but I think that I am rather attracted by a certain novelty about America, and it is a much greater change than one can get in the tourist's ordinary tracks about Europe. And I am still more drawn by a desire to have another glimpse of the pleasant society that I saw at Cambridge [Mass.]. So I shall probably

intrude upon you some time in the course of the summer.

You will see that we are suspending Habeas Corpus Acts and putting down secession on our own account over here. Nobody here cares very much about the Fenians, and, in fact, they are put out of sight by the cattle plague, which is playing the devil with the cows. But it is rather a disgrace to us not to be able to make something better out of Ireland—a sentiment which Bright expressed the other night in the finest speech I ever heard[1]—and Fenianism will be a good thing if it ultimately compels us to look into matters. What with Fenians, and Jamaica, and the Reform Bill we expect a lively session. . . .[2]

The second visit to America was to take place, but not at once; nor was Stephen going there as a bachelor. In May 1866 he wrote thus to Lowell: 'I am not quite certain whether my visit to your parts will come off so soon as I expected, inasmuch as these Dutchmen and Italians seem to be getting to loggerheads, and, if so, I may be tempted to go and see some of the row. I sincerely hope, however, that they will settle matters in a more civilised way, in which case you will certainly see me in the U.S.' Austrians and Italians did fall to blows in 1866, Austrians and Prussians (generically 'Dutchmen') also, and Stephen did make a somewhat belated attempt to 'see some of the row'; but I do not feel sure that he gave Lowell the only reason why America would remain unvisited.

[1] Bright's Speech of Feb. 17, 1866.

[2] The reply to this is printed by Mr. Norton among 'Lowell's Letters (1894), vol. i. p. 401; but Stephen withheld from the public a passage (quoted above, p. 127), in which Lowell praised the pamphlet concerning the *Times* and the War.

Miss H. M. Thackeray
From the picture by G. F. Watts, R.A.

great man was to spend
ment at Trinity Hall as a
ill and died. He left two
Richmond Ritchie; the other
ephen's wife.
the sisters were living by
with his
settled in

itable house at Hampstead or Ma
of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Mr.
Leslie Stephen and the young
each other at dinner, prophesied
lent, and fully impressed with the
bridge that I was an old don.'

X

THE FIRST MARRIAGE

(1865–1867)

Stephen never saw Thackeray. The great man was to spend the Christmas of 1863 with Fawcett at Trinity Hall as a distinguished guest; but he fell ill and died. He left two daughters; the one is Mrs. Richmond Ritchie; the other, Harriet Marian, became Stephen's wife.

When Stephen came to London the sisters were living by themselves in a house in Onslow Gardens, which was afterwards his home, and they had made acquaintance with his mother and sister. Very shortly after Leslie had settled in town, Lady Stephen made this note: '(*March* 24, 1865.) The Miss Thackerays, H. Fawcett and H. Cunningham to dinner: very pleasant little party.' Also this: '(*June* 1.) Leslie and [Miss Stephen] and the Thackerays with [Fitzjames and his wife] went on an expedition by train to Henley; then in a boat rowed by Fitzjames and Leslie to Maidenhead.' And so on. A certain luncheon at his mother's house Leslie could 'vividly' remember in 1895. 'I talked about novels to [Mrs. Ritchie] and ingeniously observed that I liked my old friends best; and upon being asked what novel then was my favourite, replied "Vanity Fair." I was speaking the truth and hope she saw it.' Another meeting-place was the hospitable house at Hampstead of Mr. George Smith, the proprietor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Mrs. Gaskell, after seeing Mr. Leslie Stephen and the younger Miss Thackeray sitting next each other at dinner, prophesied.

But 'I was shy, diffident, and fully impressed with the conviction acquired at Cambridge that I was an old don.'

We must remember that at Trinity Hall Stephen had been taught to regard marriage as the end of a career, the preliminary to retirement, and while there he must have seen as little of ladies as it is often given to a man to see. Besides, though editors were welcoming him, keeping yourself by your pen is one thing, keeping a family another. However, there are kind beings who intervene on these occasions. Leslie had reason to speak gratefully of one of them. 'She was a good kind woman. She liked to collect clever people at her house and had been naturally drawn to the Thackerays.' Leslie agreed to meet her and them in Switzerland. This is the summer of 1866. He could not, we have seen, visit Lowell this year, and he had arranged with Mr. Bryce 'to see some of the row' between contending 'Dutchmen.' Before his promise would become due some climbing could be done, and he found that he could have as a companion Mr. Oliver Wendell Holmes the younger, whom he had met, a thrice-wounded officer, in America.

Mr. Justice Holmes, of the Supreme Court of the United States, allows me to make extracts from certain letters in which Stephen tells his own tale.

First, there was some climbing. Then a letter came addressed to the 'Rev. Leslie Stephen,' but the 'Rev.' was struck out. We shall hear more of that letter hereafter. It made Stephen mysterious. He had got to go somewhere. The friends parted. Here a letter falls into place, though 'St. Nicholas, Monday,' is its only date.

To Mr. Holmes.

> . . . I fell into the hands of White Elephant, No. 2, after leaving you, in the shape of Franz Burgener, by whom I was whirled over the Weissthor and up the Fletschhorn—but what is the use of talking geography to you? I am on my way to Zermatt for another day or two, having at last got my marching orders, which extend my time a little. Had I known this sooner I might have taken you to Chamouni; but things in this life are generally just too late; at least so I find them. . . . I can't write

letters in this place nor do anything else of a sedentary nature. So adieu! Take care of yourself. Don't forget yours ever,

L. Stephen.

And next a few lines written long afterwards: 'I went to Zermatt—the trysting-place—alone. I heard of their approach and walked down the valley to meet them. One of my sacred places ever afterwards was a point where the road winds round a little bluff near Täsch. Thence I descried the party approaching on mules—there was then no railway or even carriage road—and walked back with them to Zermatt. I passed there two or three days of the happiest. How well I remember sitting on a little grassy platform under the Riffelhorn. . . . I began to know that my fate was fixed. Yet rather perversely I chose to keep an engagement which I had made with Bryce, and went with him to Vienna.'

But Moltke would not wait even for the historian of the Holy Roman Empire, and at Vienna there was not much to be seen, except Mr. George Meredith: an exception of importance to Stephen, for then began a friendship that lasted until his death; an exception of importance also to those who would know Stephen, for, though the Comic Spirit creates and never copies, there is no denying that she had looked with kindly eyes at Leslie Stephen when she created Vernon Whitford. Then Stephen and Mr. Bryce journeyed into Transylvania. What they did there may be gathered from an essay on the Eastern Carpathians which was included in the first edition of the 'Playground of Europe,' but excluded from the second.

Stephen had a long holiday this year: July, August, half September. What occurred when he returned to England, will sufficiently appear from some letters.

Sept. 20, 1866.

To Mr. Holmes.

My dear Holmes,—[When you sent me that request for certain books] I was in the centre of Transylvania, and

about as likely to get your letter as if I had been at Timbuctoo. . . . I will only add, by way of consoling you, that when I pay my visit to the United States, I will bring you a choice collection of English literature wherewith to enlighten your mind. The said visit is constantly present to my imagination and will, I think, certainly come off some time next year. . . .

Whilst you were visiting dukes and giving the sanction of your presence to the system of primogeniture, I was having a very good time. (N.B.—I always talk Yankee to you, as you know.) I stayed a week or so longer at Zermatt, and exhibited the same to certain ladies of my acquaintance. I went to Vienna, where I found the war was plainly over for the year. Consequently I resolved to investigate the Austrian Empire, and travelled through Transylvania, which, as you probably do not know, is a province of Hungary. The result of my investigations may possibly appear in the *Cornhill* of November; but I have got so much out of the way of writing that I can scarcely make even this note decently grammatical. My general result, however, is expressible simply, viz., that if there's a rotten, cumbrous, effete and utterly useless and tyrannical institution on God's earth, it is this same Austrian Empire. You used to talk great nonsense sometimes about the needle-gun; but this I will admit, that to say that the needle-gun was the cause of the Austrian defeat is like saying that Americans are a degraded race because they chew tobacco universally: *i.e.*, it is mentioning only one out of innumerable causes. The administration was rotten, and the generals were bad, and the officers bad, and the troops bad, and the whole people discontented. If the war had lasted another month, the whole Empire would have collapsed 'like a busted balloon,' as the poet observes. . . .

Nov. 8, 1866.

To Mr. Holmes.

My dear Holmes,—I am at my usual work again, that is to say, writing a great quantity of useless and frequently

stupid stuff for newspapers. At times I am rewarded a little by saying something that I really wish to say : *e.g.*, anonymous abuse of a friend or a covert insinuation of infidel principles. Unluckily these occasions come rarely when one writes to make an income, and it is necessary to grind a good deal of chaff in proportion to the corn. I read some of the greatest rubbish that appears in the English language in order to criticise it in the papers and to do facetiousness, which I think to be very poor, because editors are always begging for 'light articles'—damn them! But, you say, need you do this? Well, the fact is that I have got connected with the *Saturday Review* and the *Pall Mall Gazette* through my brother. Both papers have treated me so well that I hardly like to desert them. At the same time neither of them exactly suits my politics. The *Saturday* is, you know what. The *Pall Mall* is beginning to be much the same, except in regard to theological matters where it is really liberal, but that department belongs entirely to my brother. The consequence is that I am driven to supply the 'padding' and other second-rate parts of the newspapers. It is, however, rather a grief to me, and I shall try to persuade myself that I have a conscientious objection to my present position; for it is always pleasant to have a conscience when you are about to do something foolish. I like to take a high tone sometimes; it stops argument. When a man begins to talk about his conscience, it is pretty safe betting that he is out of order morally or physically. The former is my case just now. The world is disagreeable to me at the present moment, and I am out of temper. I could find it in my heart to curse mankind all round, you among the rest, because I have no doubt that you are enjoying yourself in America. Any one ought to enjoy himself who is out of this cursed hole, where respectability and conservatism wrap a man round like a cloak. N.B.—The above is more or less a figure of speech. In some moments I consider London to be the one place worth living at in the universe. America, the Continent of Europe, &c., are surplusage, and even England

a mere fringe or suburban park to London. Also I may as well like it as I have got to live in it.

To interrupt this nonsense, I will inform you in answer to a passage in your letter that my brother did *not* write the article on the ritualists, but Froude, who, having been nearly caught in their trap himself as a young man, has naturally a rather bitter feeling towards them. They are [unimportant to us at the moment]. I want to see you again, and if I don't come out to the United States next year, I'm a Dutchman. For first . . . secondly . . . thirdly . . . fourthly . . . fifthly, I have some thought (don't mention it to any one) of writing a book—don't swear ; it isn't about America ; but about a subject which has been working in my brain for some time. And why don't you write it at home ? Because, amongst other reasons, I have so many engagements here that I get no time to myself. Sixthly, although I scorn the imputation of writing a book or even a magazine paper, there are certain American peculiarities on which I wish to be instructed. Hence, I shall probably visit your part of the world next June and stay for some time. I am, I am aware, rather a fool for speaking so positively so long beforehand ; but it is pleasant to me to think about.

I have looked at your letter again to see if anything more requires answer. First (you see I have a few fragments of the sermon style about me, and by the way the parson at Zermatt preached against me the Sunday I left Zermatt for not coming to church—but I am wandering)—First, then, you say that Gen. Meade says that the Prussians would have beaten the Austrians if the needle-guns had been on the other side. [But the needle-guns are not to our point.] . . . I ought to have been writing an article all this time, for which I should have been paid instead of indulging in a gratuitous scrawl, vexatious to you, I imagine, because I have made it a relief for certain morbid feelings. . . .

(*Postscript.*) Friday.—I have looked at this precious production again with some wonder. I don't know whether

I was rather drunk or very much out of temper or sleepy or tired or in a fit of stupidity when I wrote it. But as you are not a fool, or not more so than a reasonable man ought to be, you shall have the benefit of it. . . .

Despite the ritualists and the needle-guns, the diagnosis of this interesting case is, I should suppose, fairly plain to reasonable men, or at least to reasonable women. A few days after the last of these letters was written, a memorandum was made in a note-book, in which the writer was wont to analyse the books that he was reading.

28 *Nov.* 1866.—This is my thirty-fourth birthday. I put down a note or two as to my position, which may be useful to me hereafter.

As to my employments, I am still writing regularly for the *Saturday*, but with less interest, and, I fear, less power than previously. I have pretty well given up the *Pall Mall Gazette*, or it has given me up. I wrote certain articles for them on Philistines, which they declined as not suitable. That has partly disgusted me, but it was only the last stroke in a gradual dropping off. I am writing fortnightly letters for the *Nation*, N.Y., and finally I am attempting to put together my book. I have spent a great deal of time lately on Comte, and must attempt to finish.

My writing is unsatisfactory, chiefly because I want an object—at least I think so. I mean to offer to the *Daily News*, because they will let me talk about political subjects which I care for—that is, if they will, I shall write for them probably. I am going on languidly in everything, and doubt much whether I shall come to much good. However, I have still enough in me not to despair of being more or less useful, and that ought to keep me up. I have 'a darned long row to hoe.' It is possible that next year may make some important changes in my life. If so, may they be for the best, but my doubt on this point troubles me terribly. If I don't take a turn for the better, I shall take one for the worse, that is pretty clear: so here's

for good luck. If it were not for my mother and [sister] I sometimes think that I should leave England. But it is too late at thirty-four to be still entirely at a loose end. It is trying to the spirits and the work. Well, never say die. I am not likely to have thirty-four years longer—at least I hope not, for I don't see how I am to get through them, and I must get enthusiastic about something. I have got enthusiasm in me, but it won't come out.

A week afterwards, on December 4, 1866, a solution was found. 'I lunched by myself at the Oxford and Cambridge, thought over the whole affair in a philosophical spirit, and went to 16 Onslow Gardens.' And now the series of letters may be resumed.

Dec. 7, 1866.

Beloved Oliver Wendell Holmes,—You did not expect to see my scrawl again so soon after the rigmarole I sent you not long ago. You will expect on seeing it that it contains some news of your chamois—ha! I can't but chuckle over that chamois. The best carver in the Alps is Zurflüh, and I begin to think he must be one of the sharpest fellows—to get money out of a Yankee without giving money's worth. No, sir, that chamois is at the present moment either at Meiringen, or in a custom house, or mislaid, or misdirected, or perhaps it has been sold to half a dozen other tourists, of whom the last may have had the common sense to carry it off with him—but this is levity.

Then why the (bad word in frequent use among the army of the Potomac, and reproduced with great effect at the summit of the Tschingel Glacier), why do you write to me—will be your inquiry.

Now, allow me by way of answer to recall to your mind a small incident which you may possibly have forgotten. I *guess* (one of my Yankeeisms for a Yankee) that you remember it, however, judging from your energy at the time. I received a letter at Zermatt, which I told you,

by way of aggravation, was about the most interesting I had ever received in my life. You bothered me to show it—said that I was not properly confidential—said you would have showed me a letter, if a letter had been written to you—and in fact showed a curiosity more resembling that of a young lady than becoming to a veteran officer, who (to speak more properly) is rather a veteran sieve, owing to the inroads of rebel bullets.

Well, that letter was interesting. What was it about, say you. To which I reply that I shall not gratify an impertinent curiosity further than to make a few remarks which follow.

First, if I had not got that letter, I might have accompanied you to Chamouni. The letter gave good grounds for staying. Secondly, if I had accompanied you to Chamouni, I should not have met the Miss Thackerays (or should I say the Misses Thackeray, or how the deuce do you put it ?), who were coming to Zermatt. Thirdly, under those circumstances I should have missed three of the most delightful days which I ever spent in my life in displaying the beauties of nature to intelligent young women. Fourthly, it is just possible that if this had not been the case, I might not be at the present moment engaged to Miss Minny Thackeray—that is to say, instead of being unreasonably and absurdly happy, I might still be in that condition of growl and grumble in which you found me.

Short as our friendship has been, my dear Holmes, to speak seriously for a moment, I know no one who will be more certain to sympathise with me than you. We always understood each other, and you showed remarkable penetration in some observations upon my character, which most people misunderstand. You therefore will not be surprised at discovering that I am not such a don but that I can fall in love, and you will appreciate the addition which this engagement makes to my happiness, or rather its lift of me from discontent and growling into the purest happiness. Do write and congratulate me—I like it—

especially from you and your like, who can do it with a will.

As for Miss Thackeray, I believe that it would be proper that I should give you some description of her, or, at least quote poetry about her. I'll see you damned first. . . .

Do you know what it feels like to be engaged? The experience of three days or so of the state enables me to say that it is psychologically interesting: (1) Because it is incredibly pleasant—I did not think four days ago that I could contain so much happiness. (2) Because it makes an absolute breach of continuity in time. About December 3, in this year, the current of my life was parted by a chasm of inappreciable breadth. I should say at a guess that about ten years came in between two consecutive seconds, or rather, though we metaphysicians say that time should be represented by a line, this part of time seems to be fairly represented thus. [A diagram.] *Intelligisne domine?* (3) Ever since this dislocation, time has been going like a clock with the pendulum off, at the devil's own pace. How many weeks or months go to a day is beyond my arithmetic. I won't bother you with any more of my feelings, but I know that you are an admirer of H. Spencer, and might like a little psychological analysis. How this affair will affect my plans I don't yet know, but you need not give up the prospect of seeing me in Boston. I am still most anxious to go there, and, I am happy to say, Miss Thackeray has some tendencies that way herself. So perhaps *we* may pay you a visit some day. Meanwhile, the great work on history, politics and philosophy is going to the dogs.

My dear old Holmes, I can't write about anything else. Do write to me and tell me you are glad to hear I am so happy. I love Miss Thackeray with all my heart and soul, but I don't love my friends the less—rather more; and nothing will give me greater pleasure than when I shake you by the hand again. I shall come to America to do that, if for nothing else. I shan't be married before June or July.

Ever yours affectionately,

LESLIE STEPHEN.

Miss Thackeray would read the first two pages, but said that I was then getting too sentimental. My kindest regards to your father, and to Lowell. Don't let them forget me. I have just got from the *Saturday* 'Wit and Humour,' by O. W. Holmes, to review. I shan't do it unless I think I can do it justice.

Here is another view of the same event from Lady Stephen's journal. 'Quite late this evening Leslie came into the room, came up to me and asked how I should like another daughter-in-law. My astonishment was great, for though I had long perceived that his manner to Minnie Thackeray was quite unlike what I had ever seen in him to any other young lady, and had thought that manner was not displeasing to her, still I was far from thinking that he had a decided, steady purpose, and a mind fully made up. . . . With my whole heart I welcomed her, and felt that I could truly and thankfully receive her as a daughter.'

The next document is a bill of fare of a dinner of the Political Economy Club, held at St. James's Hall on December 7, 1866. On it has been scratched with the point of a fork:

My dearest Minny,—I am suffering the torments of the damned from that God-forgotten Thornton, who is boring on about supply and demand, when I would give anything to be with you. He is not a bad fellow, but just now I hate him like poison. O-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-oh!

Ever yours,
Leslie Stephen.

A friend has told me that once at the dinner of some society he saw Stephen scribbling an article in a furtive way under th cover of his plate. Was this the article?

Until their marriage Stephen and Miss Thackeray were both living in London. Still he went down to keep one more Christmas at Trinity Hall. From the letters that he wrote thence a few detached sentences will be given here, for they show us Stephen at his gayest. Only one preliminary

remark is necessary. Fawcett was about to marry, and would thereby lose his fellowship. That he should be elected to another fellowship which he could hold as a married man was Stephen's eager desire.[1]

(1) I got to the Eastern Counties Station last night at the same moment as M., my foolish admirer, but a very good fellow for all that, and one N., a fellow of ours. We talked and smoked all the way to Cambridge. I always get excited somehow, coming down to Christmas, and M. is good at talking, so we were very harmonious. I only swore at M. once, contradicted him flatly about three times, and snubbed N. with great vigour, which had the peculiar effect of making him talk faster than before. We got to Trinity Hall punctually at 11.30, and then went to Fawcett's room where we had some tea and smoked and talked till one. I am glad to say that I think we can fix Fawcett's fellowship all right, as the youth who has the first claim to a vacancy has declared himself a Wesleyan, and, in consequence of our abominable laws, can't be elected. It is rather facetious that in consequence of this we should elect that attached member of the Church of England, old Fawcett, who doesn't believe one of the Thirty-nine Articles, except perhaps that which says that a Christian may swear.

This morning I went to the usual breakfast at the Master's, of which I send you the bill of fare in the hand of the old cove himself, to prove that my prophecy about the kippered salmon, bloaters and grilled fowl was right. The conversation turned chiefly upon the kippered salmon —which was interesting, as you may guess. I received the compliments of my friends, old Fawcett being the jolliest. I had a conversation with him somewhat to this effect : Miss Thackeray is the youngest, isn't she, Stephen ? Yes. Does she write as well as her sister ? No. Doesn't she write occasionally ? No. Doesn't she help her sister to write ? Wouldn't she write well if she did write ?

[1] 'Life of Fawcett,' pp. 125–127.

&c. &c. &c., which I succeeded in stopping by inextinguishable laughter.

(2) The old place with the old people doing and saying exactly the same old things seems to have carried me back to the past so much that I am obliged to shake myself and look at your photograph to make me sure that all beyond Cambridge isn't a dream. Writing to you is another way of getting, at least in imagination, outside my prison walls. I have just been for a walk with Fawcett: precisely the same walk that I have taken times without number. I know every gate-post, almost every pebble in the road, down to the dirty boys and the men breaking stones. We ascended what is facetiously called a hill in these parts—a kind of barely perceptible swelling in the ground which serves as a pedestal for a windmill. The country, which you can see for miles, looked as if it would soon be all over blue mould, if it was not taken out of the rain. It was damp and rotten, and full of nasty dead leaves—just the place for a gallows. I shall propose the windmill to the Jamaica Committee, to be used in this capacity for Governor Eyre. Fawcett and I, of course, talked the talk which we have talked any time these ten years. Mixed with a little fresh scandal, it always suits my taste very well. He boasted very much of his powers of prophecy, as illustrated in our case, and I of course pooh-poohed him.

I am now going in for another shot at 'Christie's Faith.'[1] I am feeling devilishly lazy. Oh! I will try a pipe; it may wake me up (5 P.M.). 5.45. I have done it: both pipe and article.—Since which time I have been to dinner, and since then talking without cessation. . . . I must say again that I have very faint ideas of the conversation, which appears from the above to have lasted six and a half hours, except that it was animated and agreeable. Y., who is an excitable youth, let off various orations, to which I skilfully prompted him, denouncing the Duke of Wellington, Prince Albert, and various other swells, and

[1] A novel reviewed in the *Saturday Review* of Jan. 19, 1867.

praising Fenianism, at all of which we laughed very heartily. But as all amusements come to an end in time, this was finished too, and I am going to bed.

(3) I continue my log. I sent off your letter this morning and sat down to continue a pipe, and reflect upon a middle for the *S*[*aturday*] *R*[*eview*]. I had not gone far before Fawcett looked in. We sent for X., and held a council of war. Our talk over, I had to go off to Wolstenholme at Christ's. We were to go to Newmarket. Fawcett, who is one of the strongest men I know, has, like many strong men, become absurdly nervous about his health, and declares that no one ought to walk more than ten miles a day. Consequently he refused to accompany us, and we went alone. With Wolstenholme I can always be happy, and we had a pleasant walk, doing the distance over very heavy and muddy roads at an excellent pace. Wolstenholme was very pleasant and sympathetic in regard to a certain affair, and held out hopes of meeting us in Switzerland. We lunched at Newmarket, and started back in cold dismal rain. However, we stepped out with vigour, quoted poetry to cheer us when it became dark, according to our custom, and finally reached Cambridge in comfortable time for dinner. . . . The conversation was of a kind that always makes me swear, consisting of long discussions about wine, which seems to me the sort of talk in which prize pigs would indulge, if prize pigs drank claret instead of pigwash. After dinner followed the usual talk and smoke in Fawcett's rooms, most of which, equally to my vexation, was upon whist : another subject which offends me, for if above the capacity of pigs, it certainly seems to be below the capacity of men. And now I have come away, and am writing this in my room. I shall try to compose myself by reading a bit of poetry. . . .

(4) Since I wrote the above, our great battle over Fawcett has come off. It will not amuse you so much to hear of it as it amused me to fight it, but I must give you some account of it for want of any other news. Fawcett resigned yesterday, and we met in audit to-day and talked most

soporific talk about farms and leases and incumbents till one. We then began the interesting dispute. There were ten of us present, and eight votes were required for an election. I was pretty certain of the Master and six others, but three were very doubtful, and, as it seemed, actually opposed. [However, to make a long story short, the requisite majority was obtained after Stephen had 'given vent to a burst of eloquence.'] I am very pleased that my last performance as a fellow was to defend old Fawcett, who did the same for me two years ago when I resigned my tutorship. We have fought many battles together and won them, and I am delighted with this crowning victory.

(5) Our audit is over—the last I shall ever attend, and I have at least the satisfaction of a cheque for £167 1*s.* 3*d.*, or thereabouts, some of which will come in handily for different purposes, *e.g.*, the purchase of certain coats and waistcoats, to suit your taste, you perverse young woman. I am uncomfortable at this moment for a special reason. If you get this letter before you see me, you may know that Huxley has come up. He promised to come to-night, if he came at all. I can't feel safe till the mail train is past at 11.30, or thereabouts. Oh! Huxley's come—confound him! (*Resuming on another day.*) And yet it seems ungrateful, as he is really a most agreeable man, considering that he is a scientific swell. I have enjoyed myself more since he has been here than I did before, perhaps because my period of transportation is coming to an end. I tried to conceal him last night at dinner, but he was carried off by the Master, and had to sit among the heavy dons at the end of the table. However, I enjoyed myself well with certain friends, and after dinner Huxley joined our smoking party, and we had good talk, denouncing Governor Eyre and the British aristocracy by the hour. It would have done you good to hear us. This morning I took Huxley to breakfast with Wolstenholme, and since then we three had a walk together, which was pleasant, as the weather was charming, and our

talk of the most liberal tendencies. To-night is our last dinner.

(6) You say in one of your letters that Cambridge cannot have done me harm. I hope and believe that it has not dried me up into a hopeless mummy, 'walking about to save funeral expenses,' and with a soul that ought to rattle like a dried pea in a pod. I hope that it has not done that for me, as it does for some; and I may even say that in some directions it has even done me good—not least in giving me some claims to the 'flattery' of certain persons.[1] But it has done me harm too. It has made me lead for many years a half-and-half kind of existence, like a plant grown in a cellar. I am quite conscious of the defects which such a life has produced in my character, though you have kindly overlooked them, or not found them out. But I hope that I am not yet too far gone to be revived. . . .[2]

The marriage was not to be until June, partly, so I understand, because Stephen had undertaken to do some work for *Fraser's Magazine*. It seems to have been more than the writing of an article; apparently he was for the time acting as Froude's assistant or deputy. A few extracts will carry us over the interval.

March 25, 1867.

To Mr. Holmes.

I am first bound to thank your father, through you, for his kind letter to Miss Thackeray. . . .

Of personal history I have little or none to give you. I hope that you may know before long what it is to be engaged. I find it, as I need hardly say, exceedingly pleasant; but it has the drawback—especially when the lady lives on the other side of Hyde Park—that it wastes (I don't

[1] The context shows that the allusion was to some of his pupils.

[2] I desire to say that I have not looked at Stephen's most intimate letters. Some select passages from them were copied for me by one who is guilty of no sacrilege.

know how to spell that word) a great deal of time. I have hardly read a book except for strictly professional purposes for three months. One of the few I have read is Dixon's 'New America' [unfavourably criticised]. Talking of books you will perhaps be in the way of seeing a volume of 'Essays on Reform,' just published. You may find in them some remarks by one you know, on American experiences. I always think it impudent in any one (let alone Dixon) to talk about a big country on the strength of three months' experience, and I admit that the remarks of the other author are open to this objection. Still, they are chiefly directed to the negative conclusion that an argument from the United States to England is necessarily unsafe, and often directly fallacious—in which I think you will agree. . . . In your last (or last but one) you spoke very highly of 'Ecce Homo.' To say the truth, I don't agree with your estimate [for reasons that are given at length]. Forgive this outburst of zeal. I hope that you are getting on well, and sincerely wish that I was coming over to see you this year. . . . Miss Thackeray is as anxious as I am to come, though, I regret to say, somewhat 'secesh' in her principles. . . .

June 18, 1867.

To Mr. Holmes.

Be it known to you that my writing this letter at all is no small proof of affection. . . . It has just struck twelve, whence it follows that in less than nine hours I shall be a married man. . . . I think it highly probable that if I don't now, I shan't write at all for some time to come. Hence I sit down with portmanteau still unpacked . . . and with my brain in a whirl of congratulations and wedding presents and settlements. . . . I have been very happy and incredibly idle for these six months. I have written a few, a very few, articles, read about two books, one of them . . . Hep Dixon's gossip about America and the Mormons. I have knocked about in the country, [and] rowed down the Thames—without exception the

loveliest river in the known world—in its way, that is. [Introduction of a friend]. Pardon me my twaddle and my friends, my dear fellow, and, that I may write two lines seriously, I assure you that I very often think of you and always with a strong desire for another meeting.

(*From Lady Stephen's Journal, June* 19.) 'This day Leslie married to M. Thackeray—a most original wedding—at 8 o'clock in the morning . . . nobody invited, but a large number of friends and acquaintances assembled. . . . As soon as it was over L. and M. set out for Paris.'

An exact itinerary might be given. It was a visit to the Playground: to Grindelwald, Martigny, Zinal, Zermatt. Then there was a brief look at the Italian lakes and Milan: a return by the Maloja to Chur. Italy had few attractions for the bridegroom, who hated 'sights' as they have seldom been hated. Early in August he and his wife were once more in England.

Aug. 18, 1867.

To Mr. Holmes.

. . . I was married on June 19, and to avoid all folly of breakfasts, &c., we got it done at 8 A.M., and started by the Folkestone and Boulogne train for Paris. . . . We went to Switzerland and visited my dear old mountains, and to you—being out of the possibility of peaching—I may whisper that I felt certain pangs at staying at the bottom, instead of bounding from peak to peak across the fathomless abysses of the glacier. However, I had, as you may well believe, a glorious time notwithstanding. The pleasantest bit of all was a week at Zermatt, combined with good company, to wit Hinchliff and the Westons. Every evening we enjoyed the rare and delicious flavour [*hiatus valde deflendus*], and I should say that every evening we thought as we made it of the untutored savage whose rude art enabled us first to concoct it.[1] We had glorious rambles, too,

[1] Alas! The learned judge has forgotten its name.

Leslie Stephen

from a photograph by Julia Margaret Cameron

[illegible]

[illegible] romantic cottage, suitable for a popular [illegible] quently a trifle damp, with a pretty [illegible] w over the meadows and the river [illegible] ley, with a pretty church spire. [illegible]

[illegible] Thackeray, Mr. and Mrs. [illegible] children, [illegible] and two, who are wards [illegible] a fashion, their father being in India, [illegible] dog, O ignorant Yankee!) and a rabbit. [illegible] and very happy, and have a paddle on [illegible] admiring the beauties of nature. We are [illegible] and a half from London by rail, and I [illegible] ionally; but we shall not finally remove [illegible]

[illegible] the impression that I am almost [illegible] comfortable than a man ought to be [illegible] the truth. I believe [illegible] of a wife, and to have [illegible] existence at Cambridge. It [illegible] a cove's faculties to live as a [illegible] society with very little external [illegible] rusty and stupid and morose, [illegible] family and social existence in [illegible] had not undonned me. I was wanting much to

about the hills, gathering edelweiss, of which I will insert a fragment by way of reminiscence. . . ,

I got home a fortnight ago, and am now staying at what I hold to be the loveliest place in all England. The Thames is not so big as the Mississippi, as you may possibly be aware ; but it is rather more cultivated, and in the way of tamed, quiet scenery, gardens and parks, and trim meadows and old-fashioned country inns and quiet houses nothing can beat it that I know. The beauties are humble, but of a soothing, almost soporific nature. In short, it is the essence of domestic English scenery, and Henley from which I write, is the most English and most lovely of all. My sister-in-law has taken a cottage here : a little ivy-covered, romantic cottage, suitable for a popular authoress, and consequently a trifle damp, with a pretty little garden, and a view over the meadows and the river and the little town of Henley, with a pretty church spire. It is small scenery, but exquisitely finished and pleasant to live in. . . .

Our household consists of Miss Thackeray, Mr. and Mrs. L. S., two little children, ages four and two, who are wards of the ladies after a fashion, their father being in India, a colley (=a sheep-dog, O ignorant Yankee !) and a rabbit. We are very quiet and very happy, and have a paddle on the river daily, admiring the beauties of nature. We are only about an hour and a half from London by rail, and I go up there occasionally ; but we shall not finally remove for six weeks or so. Now I ought, if I have done rightly, to have conveyed to you the impression that I am almost happier and more comfortable than a man ought to be in this world. For, to say the truth, I believe myself to have been very much in want of a wife, and to have been not a little spoilt by my donnish existence at Cambridge. It always tends to shrivel up a cove's faculties to live as a bachelor in a bachelor society with very little external communication. One gets rusty and stupid and morose, and even a comparatively family and social existence in London had not undonned me. I was wanting much to

take root, and am truly thankful that I have done so to my heart's content. In short, I am very happy indeed, and don't mind saying so. That is rather a commonplace after marriage, but in my case marriage was even of more importance than in most. Add that I am pretty hard at work penny-a-lining, and I think that you will admit me to be an enviable cove. . . .

Ever thine,

L. Stephen.

XI

HOURS IN A LIBRARY

(1867–1873)

Stephen's life during the next eight years (1867–1875) can, I think, be best represented by a series of extracts from his letters. That method has, it need hardly be said, certain drawbacks, but it has the great advantage of allowing him to speak for himself. Until he began to suffer from the effects of incessant 'scribbling,' he was, in at least one sense of the term, a good letter writer, and happily for us, some of his best friends lived on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. At this point I call to mind two of his published dicta: (1) 'Nobody ever wrote a dull autobiography'; (2) 'The biographer can never quite equal the autobiographer, but with a sufficient supply of letters he may approximate very closely to the same result.' It will be my endeavour to make Stephen as autobiographical as he can be made.

16 Onslow Gardens,[1] *Dec.* 22, 1867.

To Mr. Holmes.

This comes wishing you a happy New Year, seeing that when you get it, it will be too late to say anything about Christmas. However, Christmas is a proper season for writing it, because at Christmas we are told to forgive those—amongst others—who have never answered our letters. [Proposal for a regular interchange of letters at half-yearly intervals.] To begin, then, let me tell you how I am situated. I have a nice little house at the above address (of which make a note), which formerly belonged

[1] Unless the contrary is stated, all letters are written in London.

to the Miss Thackerays. It is like some thousands of other houses in London, and you can imagine it without further description. My household consists of self—which I put first without prejudice—of my wife, her sister Anny, and two small children, daughters of an Indian cousin. . . . I grind steadily away, sneering at virtue and enthusiasm in the *Saturday Review*, and airing some of my pet crotchets elsewhere. You may see some of the results in the *Nation*, though, owing to the infernal regulations of our Post Office, some of my communications have disappeared altogether. If you look at the *Cornhill* you may observe two admirable articles, one called 'The Regrets of a Mountaineer,' in last November,[1] and one on Richardson's novels, in this, the January number,[2] whose author I leave you to guess. Is penny-a-lining good for the morals? That is a very difficult question. It has, however, the merit, in which most money-getting employments fail, that there is in it very little of the disgusting detail, which always sickens me inexpressibly. A lawyer or a parson has to attend to a lot of small practical matters, which to me are simply maddening. I am not a poet, but I have as instinctive a hatred of business as if I had been Shakespeare himself. Consequently, I like an employment which, at any rate, gives me work of an intellectual nature. If I don't get much money, I can at least thank God that I have no accounts to keep, and no wearisome papers to tie up in red tape. Only, if it had not been for my marriage, I think the Bohemian element would have come to life in me, and that by this time I should have been a wanderer on the face of the earth. As it is, I must keep my nose pretty steadily to the grindstone. I am not a prophet or great teacher of mankind, and it is rather difficult for a journalist to set up in those capacities; but I hope that on the whole I abuse scoundrels and support what I believe to be right.

My friends are bullying me to become a barrister, and I have gone so far as to qualify myself by the admirable

[1] Republished in 'The Playground.'

[2] Republished in 'Hours in a Library,' Ser. 1.

course of training prescribed by the rulers of the British Bar. I have already eaten six dinners, and by the end of three years I shall have eaten thirty-six; after which I may, if I choose, buy a wig and gown and accept such briefs as any confiding attorney may entrust to my care. I don't much think that I shall ever go through with it. I am 35 now, and 38 is rather a late period to enter a profession which generally consumes the whole of a man's youth in getting business. It is just possible that by 45 or 50 I might be a promising junior, and about 60, in case of unexpected success, I might receive some small appointment. That is a brilliant look-out certainly; but against it must be set the distraction in the way of my literary career. I would rather on the whole write a good book than be a judge, and I find one object of ambition quite enough at a time. So I don't think I shall trouble the benchers to admit me. Meanwhile the consumption of twelve dinners a year does not commit me to any overwhelming occupation.

I don't know whether I have given you the impression that I am exceedingly happy; but I ought to have. My wife is everything you may please to fancy her, and my sister-in-law is a model of all conceivable sisters-in-law. We have heaps of friends—in fact so many that the difficulty is to keep hold of them in this intricate wilderness of a city. Of course my father-in-law, whom I never saw, had an innumerable acquaintance, and a large number of them remain to his daughters. Now London with plenty of friends, and a family that one loves, is to my mind the pleasantest place in the universe. My mother and sister and my brother have migrated across the park [from north to south], and we all live within a few minutes' walk of each other, and with sundry cousins we form a little colony in the neighbourhood of the South Kensington Museum.

I had a walk with my brother this afternoon, and a discourse about many things. For a wonder we did not have a theological argument. He is cramful of such questions, and discourses of them with great unction in

the *Pall Mall Gazette*. English theology appears to be getting more and more drivelling. Our ritualists are very good young men, but their intellectual imbecility is something awful. Yet on the whole they seem to me the liveliest part of the church. There is a fearful lawsuit going on as to what clothes they may wear, and the only way of deciding it is by finding out what clothes people wore in the days of Charles I. That people should fight about such matters, as if their souls depended on it, is a fearful and wonderful spectacle. . . .

June 25, 1868.

To Mr. Holmes.

. . . It will always be a great pleasure to me to do anything that I can for any friend of yours. I say this more or less with ulterior views. Yes, my dear Holmes, pray understand that I have been the very perfection of hospitality to the Yankee race in general, for, to say the truth, I am going to claim a return in person. My wife and I intend to pay you a visit this autumn. By 'you' I mean the United States, but more especially that pure and reformed part of them which surrounds Boston. . . . Before my marriage I had saved a little money—I can't say that the process continues—and have enough in hand to pay for a visit to the U.S. Would that I could make the visit pay in return, and bring back £30,000 *à la* Dickens! Do you think that if all Boston were covered with placards to this effect: 'The President of the Alpine Club is coming!' that there would be a crowd waiting all night to secure tickets for his lectures? If so, let me know. . . . Our plans are rather vague, but I think that we shall begin by Boston . . . and afterwards go to Washington and New York in that order. I mention Washington because my wife's most intimate friend [Mrs. Freeman] is the wife of an attaché to the English Minister. . . . We shall not travel about much because we want chiefly to see the people, and my wife has solemnly sworn never to go to Niagara. So much for our schemes, which are a trifle vague. My

sister-in-law, Miss Thackeray, will, I much fear, stay at home. . . .

I am going on very much as usual: about two articles a week in the *Saturday*, one in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and occasional magazines. I must write a book to steady me. Don't be afraid! It will not be entitled 'A Trip to America'; but, to deal honestly with you, and also confidentially, the scheme which I have in my head is for a political work, to which I think the United States will furnish certain illustrations: so that my time there will not be entirely wasted, though not altogether turned to profit. . . . English politics just now are in a most bemuddled condition. Parliament wrangles and disputes and talks nonsense and does nothing. There are no leaders and no policy and no common sense. The Reform Bill will change all this, it may be, and we shall shoot Niagara. I am very glad of it, for we are terribly in want of an earthquake of some kind.

The great event in our family is that my brother has become a Q.C. . . . I sometimes feel that my quieter and humbler way of life has its advantages. I shall never get any appointment, except that of editor to some periodical, and I certainly shall not make money nor become a swell in the eyes of the world. Still I enjoy my work, and have a number of pleasant friends. The last remarkable person with whom I made acquaintance was the queer old poet Tennyson. We spent a month at Freshwater, and saw a deal of him and his pleasant wife and children. He is the queerest old bloke, to speak irreverently, that I ever saw. . . .

I can't tell you how much I look forward to being again under the Stars and Stripes, and shaking hands with you and your father, as also with Lowell and some others.

In 1868 Stephen paid his second visit to America, going this time as a married man. If he had friends there, so also had his wife: friends who had hospitably entertained her father. The first part of their tour was not altogether

successful. After some days at New York they wandered out by Saratoga to Lake George, hoping to make an expedition into the Adirondacks, 'a remote mountain region which lies near the lake, and is still, they say, in a primitive condition.' But Mrs. Stephen fell ill, and they were glad to find themselves in Lowell's house at Cambridge. Some extracts from letters may now tell what is best worth telling.

LOWELL'S, CAMBRIDGE, *Sept.* 6.

To MISS STEPHEN.

We are at last in real comfort and with kind friendly people. . . . Minny was very wretched till we got to Boston, where she arrived quite battered and wearied about ten in the morning. I was quite glad to see the place, it looked so friendly and English, and we went straight off to a hotel. . . . After dinner I got into the street-cars and came out here. Lowell and Mrs. Lowell are really affectionate, and begged me to come out at once: said that they had been keeping a room ready for me. I thought that it would be such a comfort to get poor Min out of hotels and into a private house that I accepted at once, and next morning Lowell came in with a carriage and brought us out. . . . Lowell is most friendly, and his daughter is very anxious to do everything she can for Minny. She has been getting visibly better. . . . Meanwhile I sit and smoke with Lowell in his study, which looks exactly like my impression of it to the minutest particulars, and drink a little whisky toddy with him in the evenings, and do a great deal of pleasant talk about things in general. I am going to write him an article for the *N. American Review*.

BOSTON, *Sept.* 13, 1868.

To LADY STEPHEN.

I am glad to say that I can at last give you a really cheerful account of our affairs. I have employed myself partly in writing a review for Lowell, who is the editor of the *N. American Review*,[1] and otherwise have been chiefly

[1] 'The Political Situation in England,' *N. American Review*, Oct. 1868.

employed indoors. His friends come out and see us every now and then, and sit and talk for great lengths of time. Dr. Holmes, I think, is the pleasantest. He is a most jolly, cheery little man, full of talk, and very clever talk too. We dined with him one night, and young Holmes has spent two or three evenings with me. Nothing can be kinder than the old Doctor and his wife. . . . I am not going to write politics to you or anything of that kind, because after all I have not much more to say on such matters than I should have if I was in England. Of course I have occasional discourses with Lowell and others, but I doubt whether you would care much to hear about reconstruction on republican principles, and so on, when you can read all about it in the *Daily News*, which I hope you get instead of the villainous *Times*. . . . Lowell's house stands in a little garden, which scandalises Min very much from its roughness and want of flowers. However, it is a large piece of ground with fine old trees all round it, and a kind of wilderness at one end, and two cows, which roam about and are sometimes tied on the lawn just under the drawing-room windows, and little beds of melons, pears and various other fruits, which we devour in great quantities; and crowds of little squirrels running about, and tree toads, and innumerable quantities of crickets, which keep up a continual chirping. . . .

WEYMOUTH, *Sept.* 20, 1868.

To MISS STEPHEN.

. . . We stayed at the Lowells' till Friday; then we came on here to stay with the Westons. . . . This is a funny little old-fashioned house in a quiet New England village, with a number of cats and dogs and a big rambling sort of uncultivated garden. . . . I took Minny out for a couple of short walks, which she can now enjoy, I am happy to say, and looked at the funny and bright little village, with its white timber houses, all neat and smart with green shutters, and their slovenly gardens, and the country, which has something very wild-looking about it, all woods

and knobs of occasional granite and little ups and downs. . . . To-day I went to church with Miss Caroline [Weston] to hear a female clergyman or clergywoman, who preached a sermon, about as good as most sermons, to a quiet little congregation. There was nothing very odd about it, except the fact of a woman preaching; but I think that I shall make a little letter about it for the *P.M.G.* . . . We have a good many people to see in Boston, and some of them, I am sorry to say, have shown a desire to take me to see various 'institootions,' as they call them.

Boston, *Oct.* 10, 1868.

To Lady Stephen.

We are very nearly at the end of our stay in this place. The last week has been very pleasant to us. We seem to have done so much that I almost forget where we were at the beginning of the week. If I remember rightly, I went to dine at the Club on Monday . . . and there I met Dana of 'Two Years Before the Mast': a pleasant man, whom I had known here five years ago, and who is now very busy standing against General Butler, whom I hope he will succeed in beating, though there does not seem much chance of it. . . . I dined with a friend of mine, a Judge Gray, who is a brother of the Major. There I met Sumner, whom everybody abuses, but who really is very pleasant so far as we have been concerned, and who has, as I suppose I have said, a funny resemblance to [Fitzjames] which is always perplexing me. . . . On the Saturday we came to the Fieldses (the Macmillans of the place) where we still are staying. . . .

West Point, *Oct.* 18, 1868.

To Miss Stephen.

It is becoming rather impossible to remember the weeks. . . . On Monday the Emersons came to stay with the Fieldses: old Mr. E. and his wife and daughter. He is considered to be a great prophet in Yankeeland, though I don't much worship him. However, he has the merit of

being a singularly mild, simple kind of old fellow, who does not presume in the least upon the reverence of his worshippers. He gave us a lecture in the evening, which was attended by the intellectual people of Boston; and as everybody I saw afterwards thought it necessary to apologise to me for it, I presume it was not one of his best. It certainly was a very rambling, incoherent piece of talk about the principles of art, and there were not even many striking sentences in it. He said one or two good things, but by no means anything so good as a prophet ought to say. The next day he amused us at breakfast by being very anxious to hear anything about the authoress of 'Charles Auchester,' a book for which he professed a wonderful admiration, but which, according to my recollection, is a very wishy-washy performance.[1] However, he was so kind and benevolent, and talked so much like a virtuous old saint, that we could not help liking him. . . I went out to have a final talk with Lowell. He was even pleasanter than usual, and we had quite a sentimental parting, with various promises to see him again, whose fulfilment I feel anything but confident about. He has been so kind and pleasant, and is such an intelligent, amusing man that I regret taking leave of him more than of any one else in America. On Wednesday we came on to New York. . . .

New York, *Nov.* 1, 1868.

To Lady Stephen.

. . . Godkin, with whom we are staying for a couple of days, is the editor of the *Nation*. . . . He is a remarkably sensible, intelligent man, and I have a good deal of interest in talking to him, about politics especially, in which he is the most reasonable American I have seen. He is the correspondent of the *Daily News*, and has been nearly always right in his predictions. . . . On Wednesday or Thursday we go to Washington. . . . This day fortnight

[1] The authoress was Elizabeth Sara Sheppard. The novel was dedicated to Disraeli, who said that 'no greater book will ever be written on music.' *See* 'Dict. Nat. Biog.'

we shall reach Philadelphia, and stay there for a week or so, getting back to New York a day or two before we sail.

PHILADELPHIA, *Nov.* 22, 1868.

To J. R. LOWELL.

I must send you a farewell before leaving the U.S. We are off on Wednesday next, being compelled to depart, by pecuniary considerations partly, and partly by family affections. Otherwise I think we should be willing to stay out the winter at least. My wife, you will see by this, has come to a happier frame of mind. When she reached Boston she was at the lowest ebb, and considered America to be a howling wilderness. Ever since her spirits have been going up, and she can now do nothing except make plans for coming back. So you may look out for us about 1870. The one drawback has been Washington, which on the whole is about the most God-forgotten place on this earth, unless, to quote the language of the country, it is rather the most God-damned place. Anyhow the wisdom of your ancestors in selecting it does not strike me very forcibly, and the wisdom of the British Embassy, who were our chief acquaintances, is still less conspicuous. Imagine a small knot of British swells with no employment but that of cursing the country from morning to night, and knowing nothing of the said country beyond the specimens collected at Washington, and you may fancy what a convivial party they form. I never saw a more melancholy collection of fish out of water, with the exception of Mrs. X., who was jolly and radical in spite of everything. Why can't diplomats be abolished ?

[*Interpolated from a letter to Miss Stephen:* We made acquaintance with one charming old gentleman, Prof. Henry. . . . Then he took us to see some of the distinguished people in these parts. We saw the President who is, and the President who is to be, and the President who might have been ; that is to say, Johnson, Grant and Chase.]

I saw Grant, who was amusingly homely, with a big

family picture, like the one in the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' covering one side of his room, and a family Bible, and a wife like a pleasant farmer's wife in England. Diplomacy in general groaned at your wickedness in electing him instead of Chase. I said that if I butted Chase in the stomach, I was certain he would double up and probably bust; whereas if I knocked my head against Grant's, it would be like rapping it against a hard Scotch pebble. They said it was all owing to your damned democratic cussedness and perversity generally that you could prefer such a rough. Also we saw poor Andy Johnson, who had rather a touching look of everlasting boredom, and was not undignified, and old Seward, who reminds me of a picture by Millais of *The Evil One Sowing Tares*. So much for Washington, which my soul abhors!

[*L. S. to his Sister:* We went to see Johnson. . . . He spoke in a kind, melancholy sort of way, and quite touched Minny's heart by his look of weariness, as if he had been bothered more than enough.

Mrs. Stephen to her Sister: But the one I like best of them all is the poor old ill-used President. . . . My heart melted to the poor man. He looked so tired and fagged. . . . When we were going away he went up to the chimney-piece and took a nosegay of flowers out of a pot, and said to me with the air of a melancholy prince, 'Please, will you allow me to give you some of our flowers? I have nothing better to offer you,' and I concluded by thinking him a most ill-used man.[1]]

We had a very good time in New York, specially with the Shaws at Staten Island, who are a most charming family. We go there to-morrow to take leave of American society in their persons and don't wish to see better representatives. . . . Here at Philadelphia we have been exceedingly happy. The Fields, with whom we have been staying, possess in the highest degree what seems to me a specially American

[1] Mrs. Richmond Ritchie has very kindly allowed me to see the letters written to her by her sister during this tour. As this one short extract may suggest, they are delightful letters.

talent, that of making guests feel themselves at home. . . . Altogether our journey has been a great success, but I repeat what I told you when I left Boston, that I look upon that excellent city as the hub of the hemisphere—I can't quite honestly say the universe—and that the hub of Boston to my mind is very near the Mt. Auburn cemetery. I fear that my wife prefers New York to Boston as a rule, but she has grateful recollections, as have I, of that particular corner of the world. . . . I need not tell you that I look forward most hopefully to another pipe and another glass or two of whisky at Elmwood, to say nothing of their accompaniments. Meanwhile I count upon a book or two before long.[1]

Ever yours truly,
LESLIE STEPHEN.

Jan. 3, 1869.

To J. R. LOWELL.

Several things have conspired to make me wish to write to you. So wishing first the happiest of new years to you and yours, I will tell you what they were. One was a letter from you, so kind that it seems to make an answer a piece of common gratitude. You wrote it on Thanksgiving Day,[2] and it was not a happy coincidence that the day we left New York they were celebrating the evacuation of that city by the British, and that the next day was Thanksgiving. You, however, had charity enough to hope that we were not suffering agonies. Weren't we! . . . We had one gale from New York to Liverpool. . . . Another occasion of remembering you was 'Under the Willows,' which I would not read on board because I did not want to associate it for ever with the foul smells of a steamboat. Since then I have just seen a review of it in the *Saturday*. As the said review is appreciative, or, at any rate, laudatory, it strikes me that you may possibly attribute it to a reviewer who, whatever his faults, would never be uncivil to you

[1] For the answer to this letter, *see* 'Letters of J. R. Lowell,' ii. 6.
[2] 'Letters of J. R. Lowell,' ii. 6.

I therefore disavow any share in it, and add that I should find it very hard to criticise the book conscientiously. There is so much of you in it that I don't quite know whether I like it because it's yours, or because it is good poetry. I am afraid that you have not enough Swinburnianism in you to be one of the popular in the widest sense, but there is so much Elmwoodism in the book that I can't help liking it. I don't know whether this is a compliment or not; but it is true. Perhaps I ought to explain that I don't mean the tobacco side of Elmwood exclusively—I seem to catch a whiff of that too—but the glorified Elmwood which is so pleasant to my imagination. Talking of writing, I have just seen a prose essay by the same author in the *Atlantic*, which delighted me also, but in which again I may have been a little prepossessed by an allusion to one L. S.[1]—not, I hope, Lyulph Stanley. And this suggested another and still stronger motive for carrying me in spirit to the United States. Ever since I landed, I have been listening to one continued eulogy from all sorts of people of the most charming American family that ever was seen. It is, I am bound to inform you, the universal opinion that there never was, and probably never will be, any travellers more to be admired than the Nortons. We in this south-western district form a little colony. I have heaps of friends, relations and cousins all settled within half a mile of me in this quarter of London (a quarter not mathematically speaking, but meaning one atom of the brick-and-mortar chaos), which makes it a very pleasant quarter to me, and they all join in singing the Nortons' praises, or in hoping to be introduced to them. . . .

For my part, I seem to have taken root as if I had never stirred, and was never going to stir again. I am sitting in my little room, you are looking at me from the wall, my dog is asleep in one chair, and my wife writing in another. There is a charming soft London drizzle going on outside, upon which I turn my back lest I should see the backs of a dreary row of houses and the windows of a dissenting

[1] 'L. S. most lovable of men.' *See* above, p. 129.

chapel. Not that dissenting chapels, or indeed any other chapels, interfere much with my comfort. I listen with composure even to their bells, and have somewhat got the better of the bitterness I used to feel towards all denominations of Christians before I had quite shaken off my white tie. I am working away again at pot-boiling articles, and also cherish a hope that I shall some day send you something else, which, however, will not be poetry, nor an account of travels in America. I have sometimes thought indeed that 'American Interiors' or the 'Lives and Families of Distinguished Americans,' would be a taking title for a book, and that a glowing description of the study at Elmwood would make an excellent initial chapter. But I have resisted the temptation, and I shan't put you into print just yet. So I shall probably jog on in the old fashion for some time longer. . . . My wife says I *must* come to lunch. She is a fanatical admirer of Norton, and sends her kindest regards to you and yours.

Ever yours affectionately,
LESLIE STEPHEN.

Jan. 3, 1869.

To MR. HOLMES.

Here's wishing you a happy New Year and lots of them, and the same to your father and mother. May you prosper like a green bay tree, with the exception of not taking root quite so firmly, inasmuch as I shall expect to see you here some day. I have a pride, not a very diabolical pride, in the little room where I am now sitting, and I want you some day to smoke a pipe in it in return for that prophet's chamber in Charles St. Here is a plan of the room that you may realise the nature of the proposal. [Plan of the room with alphabetical key.] I am now in H [rocking-chair] on a dreary January morning, a soft drizzle of rain, and my dog—my lovely Troy—a sheep-dog of great talents and warm affections is curled up under D [a table] winking at me drowsily and dreaming of his great amusements, cat-hunting and swimming in the Serpentine. I am not

a first-rate artist, but here is his portrait. I will try mine now I am about it. [Portrait which shows that writing is done in a rocking-chair, with the paper on the writer's knees, very far therefore from his eyes: a long pipe is in his mouth.] I can't do my wife justice, so I won't put her in; but I hope that you will appreciate the comfort of the situation, and that it will make you wish to come over and see me. . . . Put some pictures on the wall about the fireplace—Lowell, photographs of an Alpine scene or two, a bit of the Cam where I used to go daily in my youth, a few old friends, a pen-and-ink sketch of Thackeray's for his children, a chamois' head, and two ancient alpenstocks on the wall, and then you need only add a few odds and ends to have a complete picture of your friend. I am very happy and comfortable, and feel sentimental to all old friends, and not least—rather most—for those 3000 miles away across that ridiculous institute, the Atlantic Ocean. . . . I think I forget as quickly as most people. I lived in the world 32 years before I came to live in London and 34 before I was married, and already it wants a great effort to realise to myself that those 34 years had really any existence, or at least that I ever had a very different life to that which I am leading now. However, the years, though forgotten, have had a considerable effect upon me—Here my wife interrupted me and *would* read my letter. Having done her own work, she naturally wished to interrupt mine. The moral to which I was coming was, I think, that the American dream, dreamy though it is, has also left permanent effects, specially in the shape of much affection for the persons I met in it, and I shall always be anxious to hear of their well-doing. . . .

SANTA CATARINA, BORMIO, *July* 31, 1869.

To MR. HOLMES.

. . . I send this from a lovely Italian valley where we are staying.[1] . . . My wife, I am sorry to say, was unwell this

[1] This summer is represented in 'The Playground,' by 'The Baths of Santa Catarina,' and 'The Peaks of Primiero.'

spring. . . . She was ordered to take baths at St. Moritz . . . We found in one hotel a king, an imperial duchess, and some other equal swells. . . . We should have had to pay like princes and lodge like pigs. . . . We therefore came on here. . . . We get up early, my wife drinks the waters, my sister-in-law talks to the Italians (she can talk to everybody), and I take long walks over the hills; after which a large dinner at 4.30, and then pipes and idleness with a book or so till bed-time. It is very jolly and very healthy, and will give us an appetite for the comforts of civilisation when we return. I expect two or three Alpine friends, with whom I hope to climb the Ortler Spitz, and one or two neighbouring peaks—that passion not being dead within me.

Our great piece of family news has been my brother's appointment to the legal membership of Council in India. . . . The question which it makes me think about is, what is the good of life on the whole? What ought a man to make of it? Ought I to live on bread and water and produce a *magnum opus*, establishing certain everlasting laws of human nature till somebody proves the contrary, or ought I to have an occasional glass of champagne and write nothing but leading articles — proving nothing particular? I puzzle over this often, and can't quite make it out. The bread-and-water plan comes rather hard upon one's wife, and does not promise so very much in the case of this particular person; and yet the other is unsatisfactory. Have you any theories about it?—not that anybody can judge for anybody else. I have had to send my boots for nails to a place three hours off and can't walk to-day; so I shall write an article for the *S.R.*—perhaps about 'Life' or 'Truth.' . . .

Dec 23, 1869.

To Mr. Holmes.

Here comes my usual letter with admirable regularity. . . . On the present occasion I happen to be unusually at leisure. I have been working hard at my anonymous

scribbling, and, I think, earning more this quarter than I have ever done before. The reason is partly that my brother has left us, and consequently has also left a vacant place in that great instructor of mankind, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which I have tried more or less feebly to occupy in part. I am just now in a greater state of excitement about it than usual. We, *i.e.*, the *P.M.G.*, are going to make a very bold attempt. We propose to become the great 'we.' We are to fight the *Times*, and endeavour to supply a cultivated British audience with first-class literature and high principles at the low rate of two pence.[1] If we succeed, I shall suck no little profit thereout, being one of the chosen few who are to have the privilege of enlightening the world on a large scale. I have been very lucky hitherto in my writing occupations, having got on to the leading journals as soon as I descended from the pulpit, and if only the public is wise enough to appreciate the pearls we throw before them, I shall be not far from the highest pinnacle of journalism. A journalist, say you, specially an anonymous journalist, is after all a very inferior sort of person. That may be so, and in some respects is so. Yet a journalist is doing a very necessary bit of work in the world, and if he is an honest man (for all hypotheses are lawful) and speaks the truth with some vigour, he may help things on a bit. . . . However that may be, I am contented and happy, and shall no doubt find channels, the *P.M.G.* or others, of bestowing my tediousness on the world.

I intend by the way to bestow a bit of it upon you, *i.e.*, a printed bit besides this MS. I mean to forward by this post a number of *Fraser*. . . . There are two articles in it which I commend to your notice: one by my brother, called 'The Present State of Religious Controversy,' which is a good specimen of his hard-hitting solid kind of way of dealing with such matters; the other called 'The Baths of S. Catarina,' by L. S. The last is of course a very trifling affair, not to say frivolous; it aims at being humorous,

[1] For a few months in 1870 the *Pall Mall Gazette* appeared as a morning paper: 'Memoir of George Smith,' p. xxxviii. in 'Dict. Nat. Biog.' Sup. vol. i.

playful and picturesque, and does not express any distinct views as to the immortality of the soul and universal suffrage. I should, however, like you to look at it; and when you have done so, please forward it, with my kindest regards, to Lowell. I always rather dread the criticism of intelligent people, and feel that if I ever wrote anything which made any talk, I should be compelled for the health of my soul to abstain from reading any remarks upon it. I am of the thin-skinned breed, and a chance remark about me sometimes makes me swear like Beelzebub for hours together. However, this remark does not apply to you or Lowell. I know from more sources than one how kindly he always speaks of me, and I don't think you would say worse than that I am a [qualified] fool, or words to that effect. The meaning of all these observations is that I am not afraid of your reading 'Santa Catarina,' and indeed I have now worked myself up so far that I have half-thoughts of sending you the next number of *Fraser*, which contains an article on Pusey and Temple.[1] . . . .

March 3, 1870.

To J. R. Lowell.

I am going to talk to you for a bit. How I wish you were here to talk to me in reply! . . . Be sure that I shall never forget Elmwood and the corner of the road, sacred to me, where I have twice wished you farewell. If I go on much longer, I shall be growing sentimental. . . . I did receive a sort of message from you in the shape of a poem called *The Cathedral*. I admired that poem very much, and, but for a certain shyness which makes it always impossible for me to talk to a poet about his own works, could say something about it that ought to gratify you if it did not. But in the next edition oblige me by being a little more complimentary to my poor countrymen.[2] They didn't mean you any harm and, I feel sure, were very good fellows at bottom. I could say something about Yankee

[1] 'Dr. Pusey and Dr. Temple,' *Fraser*, Dec. 1869: not reprinted.

[2] For the answer, *see* 'Letters of J. R. Lowell,' ii. 64.

travellers, if I could write poetry; but alas! my prosaic tendencies protect you. I have an infinite amount of satire, which presses for utterance, but can't get itself embodied in verse. So I fear it will be lost to the world.

Now I shall add a bit about myself. It is a melancholy reflection that a miserable difference in longitude separates friends so much that they can only take a faint interest in things which concern them nearly. You cannot possibly very much care to hear that my brother has gone off to India to give laws to the dusky Hindoos—I fancy some 140 millions of them, and that I and my wife and her sister are left to take care of my mother (who is one of the noblest old ladies at present existing on this earth) and my sister. Yet it makes a tremendous difference in my life. My brother, who is a very fine specimen of the genuine Briton, weighing 4 stone (= 56 pounds in your benighted language) more than I do in the flesh, and with a proportionate quantity of force, spiritual and mental, has made a fearful gap in our circle. Please God (excuse language which may be metaphorical) he will return to us five years hence, and we shall all be jolly again. Meanwhile I am tied and bound by filial duties and don't like to leave my mother for very long. . . . Ought I to bore you with this? I do it because I am rather full of it and naturally overflow to a friend. . . .

KINGSTON, *Fourth of July* [1870].

To MR. HOLMES.

What more appropriate day for writing to a Yankee than that on which the degrading bonds of dependence, &c. &c.? . . . You speak of my article in *Fraser*—about 'The Broad Church,' I presume, or was it an earlier one? 'The Broad Church,' which appeared I think, in March, is the only article I ever wrote that made a little sensation—not a very big one, it is true, but enough to please me.[1] Your

[1] 'The Broad Church,' *Fraser*, March 1870: reprinted with additions in 'Free-thinking and Plain-speaking.'

Baumann. He is really a charming fellow and an excellent guide. So I shall take him with me to the Æggischhorn.

(*Another day.*)—After breakfast I came down to sit in this dear little portico—do you remember it ?—from which I made this brilliant work of art. You know it, don't you ? It is meant for the Wetterhorn. It isn't very first-rate, but if you show it to mamma she will praise it. My guide Baumann is one of the best men I know ; but I will not go to any dangerous place with him. So don't be afraid. I have been three or four times through the Fish Horns and the route is as safe as Piccadilly.[1]

(*Zermatt.*)—The old Matterhorn was generally covered in clouds, but every now and then he suddenly glared out of them—sometimes his head, and then the great cliff, and then the huge reaches below. A fool of an Englishman, whom Melchior declares to be mad, started last night and was supposed to be trying to go up to-day. (*Zermatt, next day.*) —I felt too nervous about the Matterhorn man to go to bed again. Then I found that the two guardsmen who are here, and one of whom turns out to be a very fine fellow, were going off with their guides towards the hut to see what was going on. As there was no danger in going so far, I started with them, taking Melchior with me. We went up by the black lake (where you and I went together) and the Hôrnli. . . . Suddenly we saw two guides coming down towards us alone—the man had three with him—we felt nervous for a minute or so. The man had turned at 10 in the morning and not got back to the hut till 11 at night ! He had been 13 hours coming down a distance which is usually climbed in 2. He was a most inconceivable fool for going up in such weather, and the guides were shamefully careless for letting him go.

(*Saas.*)—Last night we six got to playing ' fly loo,' which means that every one puts down a piece of sugar and a 10 centime piece before him, and the one on whose sugar the first fly settles, gets the money. . . . Hinchcliff and I

[1] The ' Fish Horns ' are, I take it, the Viescherhörner. Stephen seems to have been on the Eiger-Joch this year : ' Playground,' p. 131.

came up here alone. We had such a lovely walk! I was settling all the way how you should be brought, and what you should be told to see. What I did see it is impossible to say. I must try a bit in [Miss Thackeray's] line. First, a lovely bridge, which you have seen, just below Stalden, and a mountain behind, all shiny with mists creeping about, and a cluster of dark old stained wooden houses above. [Sketch.] Just as I got so far, down came all the little black and white goats with their bells tinkling, and a little boy with a bough of a willow in front, and another little boy with the same behind, and the goats went poking their noses into all the dark holes and jumping on the walls and snuffing all round and butting and trotting off, each one to his bed. We go along a bank sloping to the stream. . . . There we sat down and smoked our pipes. . . .

(*Ried.*)—We will be so happy here next year. We will ramble about, and draw, and dig up flowers, and have picnics, and settle down in some cheap and pretty place. But I can't stand being alone here very much longer.

BRAMLEY, GUILDFORD, *Sept.* 22, 1870.

To his Sister-in-Law (*now* LADY STEPHEN) *in India.*

I have been rather slack in writing lately, for, unlike some people, I cannot distract my mind enough to write even to my best friends when I am in Switzerland. [My brother] knows how angry I was with him for talking *Saturday Review* on the way up the Jungfrau, and it was only with an effort that I was able even to write to Minny. However, that remark does not apply now. The only difficulty about writing is that this place is so much like a country in 'Pilgrim's Progress'—I forget its name—where there was always a drowsy atmosphere that sent everybody to sleep. We are in a sort of nook amongst round low hills with high hedges and thick groves of trees and garden walls all around us. . . . It is all very pleasant and restful for a time till one begins to yawn, and now I am suffering from a terrible attack of the fidgets. I feel just as I used to feel in church sometimes

that you, as a poet, will admit that nothing much more beautiful can be seen on the face of the earth. If you do know of anything that should give more pleasure to a well-regulated mind, you will oblige me by naming it. . . . This young woman is to be called Laura Makepeace, in reference to her grandfather's name and his pet heroine Also because I am fond of the name Laura—which, I will remark, you Yankees spoil by pronouncing it as if it was spelt Lowra. . . . Now I am plodding away as regularly as ever, and having just polished off an article for the *Saturday Review*, am about retiring to bed. . . . Perhaps I may send you a little reminder of myself in a little book on the Alps, which I am about publishing. It is a very humble performance in literature; and you needn't read it. Only accept it as a token of my regard and of my wishes that I could send you something better.

Jan. 4, 1871.

To Mr. Holmes.

. . . A young lady entered this very disagreeable world the last 7th of December. I call the world disagreeable in reference to the unlucky Frenchmen and Germans, &c., who must be finding it so; but the small world of Onslow Gardens is anything but disagreeable. . . . We are now absurdly happy and talking baby from morning till night. Did you ever remark what a beautiful object a small baby is? I never did before, but I see it now. As for a mother and child in the attitude of a Madonna, I can only say that the sight goes some way to reconcile me to papists. . . . I must not forget that this is more interesting to me than to you; yet if one does not overflow in letters, where is one to discharge one's sentiment? I turn to other matters . . . but I am getting round to the baby again. I have also seen Bryce and Dicey since their return; they cannot speak too warmly of the U.S. Indeed I have had rather to moderate their ardour than otherwise. . . .

I am at work, though I fear less vigorously than you. I scribble away in my usual style, and am settling down more

or less to work at a book which I have long projected.[1] If I ever finish it, it will take me at least two or three years, but I don't hope to get it done so soon. I am too modest to tell you what it is about. I am just going to publish a little collection of Alpine stories, to be called 'The Playground of Europe.'[2] You shall have a copy when it comes out. Read and think of the Mönch, and of that jolly time at Zermatt. . . .

Feb. 20, 1871.

To J. R. Lowell.

You are not a very good correspondent in the sense of writing often; but you are a first-rate correspondent in the sense of writing pleasantly. Your letter has given me more pleasure than I can easily tell you; and when I say 'me,' I include my wife, and, I may add, her sister. A thousand thanks for your warm friendship. . . . I am truly glad to tell you that I hope to escape from that [journalistic] drudgery more or less, by having become editor of the *Cornhill Magazine:* or rather by being about to become editor; for I shall not enter on my duties for some months. It will give me more leisure, and I hope I shall make some of my articles more intrinsically valuable. Alas! it is also another of those anchors which are fixing me terribly fast to London; but I long for a transatlantic trip, and if I live and am well and have money, I will yet see Elmwood before I die—with the bodily eye, for I see it now in spirit. . . .

April 13, 1871.

To George Smith.

Shall we meet any day to settle the next *Cornhill?* All days and hours are alike to me. I don't think there will be much trouble, as the two novels + the Siege of Paris + Mars[3] + Hawthorne won't leave much space to fill.

[1] The 'History of English Thought,' but originally conceived as in the main a history of the Deistic movement.

[2] Published in February 1871.

[3] An article on 'Life in Mars,' *Cornhill*, May 1871.

I should like, however, to know what you think of my article on Sir Thomas Browne, *i.e.*, whether you think a series of such articles would be useful. It is, of course, difficult to judge of one's own merits, and therefore an independent opinion is desirable. If you think it would do, I should propose to call it by some rather general and unpretentious name, as I don't want to fix myself down too much or to brag of my merits. 'Studies in Literature,' or some such title would be about what I mean; but I will try to think of something neater.[1]

July 13, 1871.

To Mr. Holmes.

. . . And now to business—not that I have any business, but that of giving you such information as may enable you to realise the present position and prospects of L. S. Let us see. It is 11.45 P.M. Scene, a study in Onslow Gardens. Curtain rises and discovers L. S. solus, smoking a clay pipe (which by the way he lately stole) and kicking his heels in an American rocking-chair, whilst writing to his friend O. W. H. Time has to a certain extent thinned his flowing locks and deepened the furrows on his manly brow. He looks rather worn—or, to put it in sporting language, a trifle stale, owing to some nine months passed in London during the most exacting period of his life. For, to get rid of this awkward third person, I, L. S., being, God be praised, in sound health of mind and body, do hereby inform you that not only am I a father (a fact which I must have communicated to you last Christmas), but editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*. Whereby I am not very much the richer, but have more leisure from the treadmill work of writing. I have, however, been working pretty hard, composing various observations on things literary, political and social, sapping the basis of Christianity, blaspheming the British constitution, and passing summary judgments on

[1] The essay on Browne was the first that bore the title 'Hours in a Library.' But two earlier essays, on Richardson and Defoe, were admitted into the volume published in 1874.

a variety of persons, who, to say the least of it, would in many cases be better qualified for passing judgment on me. And now, being rather weary, I am thinking of the Alps. You poor Yankees are to be pitied for many things, but for nothing so much as your distance from Switzerland. In a few days I shall be starting with bag and baggage, which includes wife and child and nurse, and going to St. Gervais near Chamouni. There I hope to be received at a hospitable hotel, and to spend six or seven weeks in the most congenial of employments, viz., doing nothing. I shall smoke the pipe of peace, climb innumerable little hills, but no big ones—for my wife won't let me—and make a feeble attempt to grow—we won't say fat—but rather less disgracefully thin for a genuine Briton. How jolly it will be! I flatter myself that few men can take leave of their consciences and their duties more emphatically than your humble servant. When I get out of sight of the *Times*, I care for nothing and nobody, and behave as much as possible like the beast that eateth grass—which I have a vague notion is a quotation from the Scriptures. . . .

July 7, 1871.

To his Sister-in-Law (*now* LADY STEPHEN) *in India.*

. . . We shall get out the *Cornhill* by about Monday fortnight, and then we shall go straight to St. Gervais. . . . Directly I begin to feel the mountains near I can talk about absolutely nothing else. I walk up and down speculating on them and trying to arrange plans for new expeditions. However, I shall not do much more in the way of climbing, though I have half a mind to add the 'reconversion of a mountaineer' to the 'regrets.' As I am so incapable of thinking about other things, I will make a diagram which will enable you to understand St. G. if you don't understand it already. [Diagram or 'elevation' of the Mt. Blanc range.] I shall now try to leave off, though it is rather a difficult matter, and to think of something else. . . .

July 14, 1871.

To J. R. Lowell.

. . . You faithlessly promised me 'My Study Windows' (a title to which I object in passing that it seems to make any sentence in which it occurs ungrammatical), and you didn't [send it]. However, I forgive you, inasmuch as under the circumstances I have done the best I could and stolen it. It now ornaments my bookshelves amongst other ill-gotten goods, and has given me great pleasure. I like for private as well as public reasons your 'garden acquaintance,' and your remarks upon foreigners; but I like it all for other reasons as well. If I found any fault, it would be that I don't think that you or any other Yankee can find it in your hearts to be quite just to Carlyle. I know that you appreciate him, because of our talks of him; but your article, though just in terms, gives me the impression of a certain prejudice against him. Perhaps it is proper to feel more strongly than I can do about his political delinquencies; but I can't help loving the old fellow; and amongst the other reasons for this is that of all us literary professionals in London he is in his life the manliest and simplest. It is a pleasure to see anybody who has the courage to live so little spoilt by the flattery which might have choked him and made him into a windbag. We, it seems to me, get spoilt more than some people in Cambridge, U.S., and he is a noble exception. . . .

By the way, I am composing a series of articles for it [the *Cornhill*, of which I have become editor], for which I was sorely tempted to steal your name 'Among my Books.' I thought it might be appropriated by italicising the possessive pronoun. 'Among *my* Books' would have implied that it was not among yours. However, as I thought that I was in danger of committing a piracy, I finally resolved to make a change, and called them 'Hours in a Library.' It comes to the same thing, you will observe, but is slightly different, and, I fear, rather too ambitious. The articles do not represent any profound research and you need not read them unless you like. . . .

Jan. 29, 1872.

To J. R. Lowell.

. . . I feel disposed to send you a line: and that is a disposition to be taken advantage of, because it comes so seldom—not, indeed, that a wish to communicate with you comes seldom, but it is seldom that the wish rises to a degree of pressure necessary to overcome my general reluctance to all writing. I write such a quantity of rubbish for pot-boiling purposes that I lose all appetite for writing of a more satisfactory kind. The whole world would not be able to contain my works, if St. John's estimate of its capacity was decently correct, were it not that the world takes the sensible precaution of putting them in the waste-paper basket; and even as I write, my fingers are cramped with previous exertions. My wife has just come back from a French play, and says that she has been crying profusely over the sorrows of the heroine. I have been calmly sitting in my chair and reading an interesting work on the defences of Christianity, of which I propose to make some use. Poor Christianity! And now, having finished my author (who says, amongst other things, that baptism is a respectable institution because in an age (1730) when cold bathing was so generally practised it could not be considered as imprudent) I can spare a few minutes for tobacco and friendship. . . . That takes me in the spirit to Cambridge, Mass., and I think how much I am changed since you saw me. There is a young lady in this house who has not got beyond saying 'papa' and 'mamma' . . . and who has altered my life for me more than I expected. You have seen me as a bachelor, and as a married man, you will soon, I hope, have the opportunity of observing me as the father of a family. I am under the impression that I do it very well. My younger friends who are in the same position never seem to me to realise the responsibilities of their position; they don't know what can be made of a baby; they treat it as a young animal, not as a specially poetical kind of human being. A baby which comes to an 'old fellow of 38'—I do not forget your indignation

at my application of those words—is a much more valuable article.[1] I calculate that I shall be so old by the time she has grown up that I ought to make the most of her. . . .

May 6, 1872.

To J. R. Lowell.

. . . When you come to England in the next spring, it is not improbable that I might be able to give you quarters in my own house. I am having one built for me [in Southwell Gardens] which will be a little roomier than this, and we shall get into it in about a year. But anyhow we will have a walk or two—ten miles a day, or over or under, as pleases you. My favourite plan, however, would not involve the necessity of trying your gout. I should propose to get into a boat at Oxford and descend the British Mississippi to London—being one of the most pleasant trips that I know—any quantities of Isaac Walton public-houses, Queen Anne gardens, and lovely Gainsboroughs all about. Tobacco at your pleasure, and, when you don't care to row, you can be towed, or, as we say in Cambridgeshire, 'haled' by pony or men. Does that arride you?

No! I shall not see Uncle Sam these two years. For one thing, I am writing a book, of which more hereafter.[2] I don't say anything about it, except to a friend or two, because I am only just making the plunge and may find the water too deep; but that article on Warburton[3] (your approval of which gave me a pleasant sensation of tickled vanity) was, as it were, a feeler or experimental trip towards it. . . . And now I must to my penny-a-lining. . . .

Jan. 24, 1873.

To Mr. Holmes.

. . . [My brother] is preaching to the world at a great rate in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and I regret to say that I

[1] From other allusions I gather that on his first visit to America, Stephen, forgetful for the moment of the difference in age between his host and himself, had talked as if the number of years that had gone over Lowell was enough to make 'an old fellow.'

[2] 'History of English Thought.'

[3] Reprinted in 'Free-thinking and Plain-speaking.'

don't much approve of some of his sentiments.[1] Oddly enough, he has been, in my opinion, a good deal corrupted by old Carlyle. I never before had so much respect for the extraordinary vigour of that person, till I saw how much influence he could exercise over a man who is little enough disposed to sit at anybody's feet. I see the prophet pretty often myself, and though I am not so independent a character as J. F. S., I am almost equally repelled and attracted by him. Personally, indeed, I am simply attracted, for he is a really noble old cove and by far the best specimen of the literary gent we can at present produce. He has grown milder too with age. But politically and philosophically he talks a good deal of arrant and rather pestilent nonsense—that is, of what I call nonsense. He is indeed a genuine poet and a great humorist, which makes even his nonsense attractive in its way; but nonsense it is and will remain, and, though it is as well to have a man of genius to give one the corrective of the ordinary twaddle, it is a pity that he is not comprehensive enough to see the other side as well. However, he could not be made reasonable without ceasing to be Carlyle, so we must take what he can give and be grateful. The wonderful force and vitality of the old man have enabled him completely to conquer Froude, who repeats his doctrines and makes them worse in the repetition. You, by the way, have had a dose of Froude lately. Did you hear him, and what impression did he make on sensible Yankees? I should really like to know. He is a next-door neighbour of mine, or nearly so, and I see a good deal of him as a contributor to *Fraser*. Nobody of my acquaintance is a greater puzzle. Sometimes I fancy that I like him very much, and sometimes I altogether turn against him. He has some very good and amiable qualities, but I never quite trust him. Partly I think my distrust is owing to the simple fact that both he and I are rather shy by disposition, and two shy people make a bad mixture. I have not seen him since his return,

[1] J. F. Stephen's 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity' was appearing in the *Pall Mall*.

and know not what impression was made upon him by America and the various wild beasts he there encountered. Here he has infuriated a number of amiable Irishmen,[1] especially that 'willowy creature,' Lecky, as Carlyle calls him. I could fill a number of the *Cornhill* with assaults upon him, if I were at liberty to insert matter of that kind. . . .

I am in good health and spirits, and working steadily—but uncommonly slowly—at the great book: not that it is great in any sense. However, it is all that I can do, and I must put my best work into it. Don't despise me if I turn out to be an impostor. Sometimes I think that I am, and am obliged to fish for compliments from the two or three friends who appreciate me. Amongst them is Charles Norton. . . .

[1] By 'The English in Ireland.'

XII

MORE HOURS IN A LIBRARY

(1873–1875)

If a momentary pause is made at this point, it is not made in order that I may introduce or seem to be introducing Mr. Charles Eliot Norton to English readers. Happily he is well known, and well known he would be even if he had published no books, for, as we are learning year by year, divers English men of letters wrote some of their best letters to him. I have only to say that Leslie Stephen was no exception to what is beginning to look like a general law. On his first visit to America he had made Mr. Norton's acquaintance, and then when Mr. Norton was living in London this acquaintance ripened to an intimate friendship. There began an interchange of long and frequent letters, which ceased only when Stephen on his death-bed was tracing with pencil a last affectionate message. These letters it has been my privilege to read, and I propose to give many extracts from them. The motive that will guide me in the work of selecting passages will be a desire to let Stephen speak of himself and his doings. A risk of making him look self-centred will thus be run, for I shall leave out a great deal that is written about his own family, about Mr. Norton's family and pursuits, and about the families and fortunes of divers friends.

The first of these letters will show a side of their writer which we have hardly yet seen, and which he did not show to many people. Deep down in Stephen's mind there was a fund of serious, sober, and earnest thinking which he was the less willing to display in talk and letters because what was gravely thought was also gravely felt. He was by this time

profoundly interested in the great problems which perplex mankind from one generation to another; and if at times, when he is writing to a friend, he seems 'to trench with undue levity on the bounds of the holy and the awful,' I feel sure that many who do not share Stephen's opinions will remember the last verses of Browning's *Christmas Eve*, and then,

> Looking beneath light speech we utter,
> When frothy spume and frequent sputter
> Prove that the soul's depths boil in earnest,

they will be slow to blame and will not need the poet's pity. In and about the year 1875 the temperature was high, as appears by many records orthodox and unorthodox.[1]

8 Southwell Gardens,[2] *May* 10, 1873.

To Mr. Norton.

I write this before you have left us entirely, that it may meet you in America, partly by way of greeting you on your return home, and partly by way of supplement to the inevitably lame utterances of a leave-taking. I feel as if I had something to say to you, though I also feel as if you knew it beforehand. However, I should like to say it once in black and white, for my tongue in even the most friendly intercourse is weighed down by more than British habits of reticence. Even now, with a screen of 3000 miles between writer and reader, I can't say outright all my mind, nor perhaps is it necessary.

This much, however, I must manage to say. You don't know what your friendship has been and will be to me. I have not, and never had many intimate friends, and, for some reason or other, it has happened that even my best friends have generally been in sympathy with me only on one side, and that not the most intimate side. I suppose that often happens; but it occasionally strikes me as rather absurd that the men with whom I have been most familiar, have been almost entire strangers to the thoughts that

[1] *See* Mr. Benn's 'History of English Rationalism,' ch. xviii.

[2] At this point Stephen moves from Onslow Gardens to a new house.

interest me most. I have known a man for years, and been even hand and glove with him, and yet he is as incapable of caring about religious and irreligious theories as I am of caring about Sanskrit. His impression about me is that I am a good political economist, a respectable radical, partly misled by female influences, and given to chaff the parsons. Well, as you know, I have some other sentiments, and the fact that you know it distinguishes you from most of my friends. It is really odd that of all the men I know, you and perhaps Morley (I can't think of a third) are the only ones with whom I can be sure of finding thorough sympathy in such conversations as we have had. My brother always wants to argue, and so do I—but an argument always ends by worrying me. X. is—you know what; and Carlyle, besides the differences in age and point of view, always impresses me with the feeling that he thinks me a hot-headed, misguided and irreverent person. Others, whom you don't know, are tainted with orthodoxy, or are disposed to be noisy—which I hate—or go in for some damned metaphysical special pleading: so that now you are gone, I not only can't fill your place but I can't get even a moderately good makeshift.

All which essay is intended to exemplify the cussedness of the universe in putting you and me on opposite sides of the Atlantic. Why should I, a good Briton, find my most sympathetic friend in a Yankee, and find him only to lose him again so soon? Well, as we used to say, submission to the inevitable is the only wisdom; and I shall try to practise it by making the best of what remains. When I am weary, as I often am, of the hardness and stupidity of many people round me, I shall think of your kind friendly face looking at me through a cloud of tobacco, and shall try to cheer up accordingly. Perhaps I shall help my imagination by writing a line to you on such occasions; but I make no definite promises as to stated periods, for writing often threatens to drive me mad.

The only fault I know of in your relations to me is that you may have been too flattering, as so good a friend could

hardly help being. However, I don't think it has done me any harm, for I seem to myself to fail more on the side of diffidence than of vanity.

The moral of the whole is that if, as I hope, I did something to help you through this melancholy winter, you have cleared all scores most liberally by giving me just one of those spiritual cordials which pick a man up about the Grand Plateau, and help him past the Mur de la Côte on to the Calotte. Excuse my Alpine metaphors!

Of course when I thank you I thank your sisters. I could only give them a growl when I left you last night. I must leave them to guess why I could only growl, and I feel rather choky just now. Good-bye to you all, my dear friends, and whenever you think of me, remember that my cynicism does not get down into my heart. I have a warm place down there, and I hope some day I may show it by some better device than these crabbed letters.

Ever yours affectionately,

L. Stephen.

Your mother touched me deeply by the kindness of her parting with me.

Aug. 18, 1873.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I don't know at what precise point you dropped out of my life and ceased to be posted up in our affairs. I guess, however, that you had left us before I proclaimed myself to be in a small way an invalid. I settled, that is, that some head-aches, which were bothering me, must be put down, and judiciously went for advice to a friend of mine, who is a member of the Alpine Club. His prescription was two months in the Alps. We went there in the middle of June, and I have just come back in the soundest of health, and ready to pitch into the Christian religion at a moment's notice. Of my Alpine exploits I need not say much. I went up Blanc once more, invented a new pass from Chamonix to Courmayeur (when I say that it was the well-known, often contemplated, but never executed

Col des petites Jorasses,[1] you will not be so much edified as you ought to be), and generally got myself into good order. That implies that I was a mere brute beast—an *animal scandens*—for eight weeks, and that my brain has been as fallow as an American prairie before Columbus. . . .

My book[2] has just begun to go to the publishers. You shall have a copy when it appears. . . . I have parted company with the *Nation* by mutual consent. I was getting a bit pumped out and rather too indifferent to our wearisome politics to be a good correspondent. Godkin, I think, rather wanted a change—in fact, he told me so; and we therefore separated on the most amicable terms. To say the truth, I am anxious to limit my literary activities to one channel as much as possible. I must do some pot-boiling in the *Saturday*, but elsewhere I am glad to draw in my horns. . . .

Dec. 1, 1873.

To J. R. Lowell.

. . . My book[3] after which you ask so kindly, has appeared. I shall not send a copy flying over the face of the continent in chase of you, but you shall have one, if you care for it, here—let us hope a copy of the tenth edition. The British public has not yet had time to express its feelings, as I only came out a couple of days ago. When they have recovered from the shock, which, I presume, accounts for their present silence, they will perhaps think right to burn me. If I escape, I shall publish another volume of purely literary essays in February next.[4] You see I am tolerably industrious. . . . We have been anxious lately about my mother. . . . It is simply an increase of weakness, and I never saw anything more beautiful and solemn and tender.

[1] Now known as the Col des Hirondelles: 'Playground,' p. 168.
[2] 'Free-thinking and Plain-speaking.'
[3] 'Free-thinking and Plain-speaking,'
[4] 'Hours in a Library.'

Dec. 29, 1873.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I will add a word or two in answer to yours. I am glad you took the dedication [1] so kindly—not that I much doubted that, but I had a qualm or two as to whether I ought to publish it without telling you. It has at least the merit of sincerity, and I am more than rewarded by the return I get from you. As for the book itself, I have been rather disappointed hitherto. It has been hardly noticed, and I have heard little about it indirectly. The absence of notice is partly explicable by various causes. I told the editor of the *Saturday* not to notice it, because I knew that he would not like to abuse me, and could not praise me. The *Pall Mall Gazette* is too virtuous to mention the work of a former contributor, for the proprietor, George Smith, is a gentleman. . . . Other friendly papers are oddly cautious. Our friend Butler (of the 'Fair Haven') wrote a review for the *Examiner*. They told him to be reticent, and yet when he 'reticed' (or whatever the word should be) they still protected themselves by publishing his name contrary to his request. As the *Examiner* is almost avowedly atheistical or Millite, this rather surprises me. Religious papers, as I hear, prefer not to give me a puff even by abuse. . . . I will not conceal from you that, so far, I have been rather disappointed; but one must possess one's soul in peace. . . . I did not send a copy to Carlyle. I regret very much my position towards the old prophet, but I cannot help it. Whenever I see him it is the old story. I like him; indeed, I might say, I feel a really strong affection for him; but he always rails at me, more or less directly, and makes me feel so uncomfortable that I retire into myself and become dogged and speechless. I think that he dislikes me; and one cannot contradict him or argue with him. Therefore, though I go as a duty to see him at intervals, I cannot say that it is a pleasure on the whole. It is a pity, and if I were less plagued with the English vice of shyness, I would try to break the ice. As it is, I fear it will probably

[1] Of 'Free-thinking and Plain-speaking.'

harden, or at least remain unmoved. Perhaps it doesn't very much matter; but, at any rate, I see no way out of it. . . .

Feb. 15, 1874.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . And then our own trouble is hanging over us. [Lady Stephen's failing health]. Consequently I don't much trouble myself about Gladstone's collapse, which I suppose ought to affect my spirits as a good liberal and patriot—though both my liberalism and my patriotism would be rather suspect to many orthodox radicals. People go about explaining why it has happened: a piece of trouble which seems to me singularly unnecessary. If W. E. G. had been elaborately preparing for a smash for the last five years, I don't well see what more he could have done. Carlyle's remarks about the performance and on the advantages of changing Gladstone for 'the man they call Dizzy,' must, I should think, be edifying; but I have not seen him lately, chiefly because I have to be at my mother's at the time when he is visible.

(*February* 22, 1874.) . . . The Gladstone smash is pretty conclusive now, and I am a subject of Dizzy's. I am sorry that I have not a better ruler; but the only thing that I fear is that he may go in for 'a spirited foreign policy,' which would mean making fools of ourselves. . . . All this business seems to me to illustrate the fact that, after all, there is a wonderful amount of dogged conservatism in the British public, and that perhaps the Constitution and even the Church of England have more vitality of a kind than I gave them credit for. . . .

I am indeed quiet to the last degree. One day is just like another, as I have withdrawn from even the moderate amount of dissipation in which I used to indulge. My only vision of the outside world was at my brother's to-day, where I saw the distinguished ex-minister X. Y. . . . [he] only affected me with a sympathetic desire to yawn. . . .

I had a letter two or three days ago from A. B., who raises certain objections to plain-speaking, if not to free-thinking, though in very friendly terms. Meanwhile, the religious press have written various reviews of me, which are really amusing in one way. They are all so much pleased with my attacks on Stanley that they forgive what they call my want of spirituality. One is half ashamed of such sympathy, but it is an odd illustration of our state of brotherly love. . . .

March 30, 1874.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . Your sister asks about an article which I mentioned on J. F. S. and self. It was dull enough and chiefly occupied with a long dissertation about liberty, which seemed to me to be vague and of no great value. The part which amused me was simply a civil request to me to know what I should do if I were put down in the slums and could only persuade the inhabitants not to pick my pockets by telling them that they would go to hell if they did. To which various replies suggest themselves—one being that I should very likely tell a lie to save my money.

J. F. S. has published a second edition of 'Liberty, &c.,' with a preface intended to blow Harrison and Morley into thin air. It is good hard hitting, but I think rather too angry, and not intelligible unless one remembers all that he said, and all that they said—which one doesn't. . . .

I am writing an article on Maurice for Morley.[1] Of all the muddle-headed, intricate, futile persons I ever studied, he was about the most utterly bewildering. But I hope to explain his vagaries tolerably. I had a walk with the immortal Thomas a day or two ago. He has been ill; but is better, and expressed a strong desire to stand over Darwin with a whip. Well, I forgive him. . . .

[1] *Fortnightly*, May, 1874; not reprinted.

May 2, 1874.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I never knew any one with such a gift for happiness [as my mother has]; and certainly that is the best gift one could have. I am not sure that I do not inherit a very slight touch of it. At least, so long as I am at work and not overworked, I never suffer from melancholy, and luckily that is my normal state. There are plenty of things to groan over, if so disposed, a fact which has been lately impressed upon me by reading some of Ruskin's manifestoes to the world. I am trying to make an article out of him, with the design of picking out some of the better bits, and saying that there is really something in him. How I shall succeed, I don't know; but I think that it might be done. It is sad to see a man of such powers so wasted, and I shall certainly touch as lightly as I can upon his weaknesses. . . .

I took a holiday in Paris a short while ago, and had a queer mixture of impressions. There was our common friend, Morison, who was very pleasant and lamented the many blunderings of his Republican friends. . . . I was poisoned at an infernal *café*, and saw a young woman at the play dying in convulsions for many minutes, and finally came home, thoroughly bewildered, with a sore throat, from which I am not yet free. But for this little escapade, I have stuck to my treadmill for the last six months, and only wish it had ground out a little more flour.

(*May* 15, 1874.) I have finished my article on Ruskin, and sent him off to *Fraser*.[1] I hope that if J. R. should see it he won't be angry with me. I have been, I think, civil; but I have rather failed, in my own view, in quoting enough of him, and given too much of myself—which is not what I meant to do; but my pen is my master, and I have not time to scratch out. . . .

I read with much pleasure Lowell's poem which you sent me. The only fault I find with him is that occasionally

[1] 'Mr. Ruskin's Recent Writings,' *Fraser*, May 1874: not reprinted.

he lets his criticism get mixed up in his poetry; but it is thoroughly good solid work—'solid' is not a happy epithet for poetry, but I mean weighty and not finicking. . . .

Talking of reviews, what do you think of your old friend Froude? The reviewers have been pretty hard on him, and some of it is deserved. I think that he is not quite fairly treated in regard to the doctrine, which he has learnt from Carlyle, about the identity of right and might, which certainly admits of an awkward interpretation, but which may be explained in a better sense. He is a sentimentalist in his way, and apt to go wrong and turn sour, like other sentimentalists; but not, I think, fundamentally wicked. However, the present book[1] is, I agree, mischievous in tendency. . . .

June 5, 1874.

To Mr. John Morley.

. . . I have heard of the *Contemporary*, but not seen it. It is rather amusing that one article should be devoted to demolishing the anti-Christian J. F. S., and another to smashing the secularist L. S.[2] Llewelyn Davies was my coach at Cambridge, and is a very good fellow. I hope he has not abused me much, as I dislike the process, and should be sorry to feel any bitterness towards him. If he has found out any gross blunders or misrepresentations, it would be impossible I fear not to be angry. Well, those who play at bowls, &c.

July 26, 1874.

To Mr. Norton.

As this is our last night for some time in the old house I shall send you a few lines. We are off to a little cottage at Cooper's Hill. . . . We look down upon Runnymede. . . . However, you will not be there to suffer from historical or literary reminiscences. We go there to be able to run

[1] 'The English in Ireland.'

[2] 'Secularism and Mr. Maurice's Theology,' by J. Llewelyn Davies: *Contemporary Review*, June 1874.

up to town easily, which, in fact, I hope we shall do [to see my mother]. . . . I am beginning to plan a retreat to the country. London is all very well; but this house is a little too big and expensive, and I have visions of retiring into some smaller house twenty or thirty miles off, where Laura could get good air, and I could work without interruption and without the necessity of writing so much rubbish as I do at present. The dream, I think, gathers strength, and I expect that it will be realised soon. . . .

Have you read [Morley's] papers on 'Compromise'? I like them myself, and have heard them well spoken of generally. Llewelyn Davies, who undertook to smash me the other day in the *Contemporary*, did me the honour of coupling me with J. M. as the two devil's advocates, who actually say that many people now don't believe in Christianity. . . . In the *Spectator* of a week ago [it was said] that I was a psychological curiosity, because I speak of poor old F. D. Maurice as muddle-headed. They have kept their wrath bottled up for six months, but it has by no means cooled. I was silly enough to write to them to say that I did not (as they said I did) insinuate that all Broad Church people were cheats; and added that when I wanted to say so, I should do it in plain terms.[1] . . .

July 28, 1874.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I am in a great hurry with portmanteaus lying about, and only want to answer a question. I will send you 'Ruskin' in a few days. I did not send 'Hours in a Library,' because—it is a very foolish reason—I am—do not mention it to any one—rather ashamed of it. I don't know why, but I have a suspicion that I am not a good critic, or perhaps it is merely a case of distorted vanity. Lowell bullied me out of a copy; but I regretted it, and could wish that the book should not have crossed the Atlantic. However, you will be merciful as a critic of mine.

[1] *Spectator*, July 25, 1874.

Don't say anything about the book when you write again, or it will seem to me as though I had been fishing for a compliment. This is written on the understanding that you will preserve a judicious silence in the interests of my moral health. Publicity, as you truly say, is a poison, and private flattery is not much better.

Yours in great haste,
L. S.

Oct. 12, 1874.

To Mr. Norton.

I have just come back from a trip to the Alps. . . . I have not, it is true, made any new ascents this year; but I had a charming stroll through the old places and feel all the better mentally, morally and physically. . . . You speak of a book which you are writing, or a study which you are taking up, about the Athenians, and specially about the Athenian women—at least that is my impression of your meaning. I hope with all my heart that the study will end in a book, both for your sake and my own. Still, I wish you were here that I might have an argument about it. I have a tendency to scepticism upon one point, though, as you know, I am not much of a sceptic generally. I can't believe that Athenian men and women were superior to people in other times in proportion to the superiority of their art. I always have a profound impression that human beings have been much more like each other than we fancy since they got rid of their tails, and that the great outbursts of speculation or art imply some special excitement more than a radical difference in the people themselves. I have even a belief that if Browning had lived two hundred years ago he would have been a small Shakespeare, and perhaps Tennyson a second-rate Milton—though I agree that poor old Alfred has not quite the stuff in him—and, in short, that we are not really shorter than our ancestors, but only at an awkward period of existence—kind of hobbledehoys. I don't know whether I am talking sheer nonsense or whether I am really contradicting you in any way. Only

I hope you won't want me to believe in the Athenians to an uncomfortable extent.

I am working at my own book, which is annoying in this respect, that a great deal of work goes a very little way. However, I think that I have pretty well collared the deists, and shall be able to give a rational, if not a readable, account of them. I shall not, I see, get the thing done for at least a year—probably a good deal more. I have an unlucky propensity for dropping into outlying things which wastes time. I bought the other day a copy of Aquinas, and find him very good reading. . . . If it was not enough to have all the Catholic theology suddenly discharged upon one, I have suddenly taken a fancy to read some of the old dramatists, being prompted by Furnivall's Society, and to puzzle my head about 'stopt lines' as F. J. F. calls them, and the share of Fletcher in *Henry VIII.* and *The Two Noble Kinsmen;* added to which I have to review novels for friends, and to edit the *Cornhill*, and talk nonsense in the *Saturday*, and I guess that I have about work enough for a stupid human being. By 'stupid,' I mean stupefied rather than naturally dense.

However, I must stick to my deists. . . . And that reminds me that the last *Contemporary* is worth looking at not only for Gladstone's twaddle about Ritualism, which has sold ten editions of the number, twaddle though it is, but for an article of Mat. Arnold's which amuses me.[1] It is Mat in excelsis—the very cheekiest production I have yet seen of his. Really I am fond of him. I fear he does not return the compliment. And this reminds me by a further association of ideas that you would do well to look—if you like to have your stomach turned—at Farrar's 'Life of Christ'—the gospels done into Daily-Telegraphese and drowned in a torrent of flummery. Lord! what are we coming to! . . .

. . . Certainly[2] I have no friend now on this side of the

[1] 'Review of Objections to Literature and Dogma,' *Contemporary Review*, Oct. 1874.

[2] The exact date of this passage is not certain.

water whom it gives me such pleasure to meet [as Morley]. Another friend, whom I accidentally associate with him, pleases me less. I went down with old Fawcett the other day to dine with Cairnes, the political economist. Poor Cairnes is one of the saddest of sights. He is crippled by rheumatism so that he can move neither hand, foot nor head, and is like a man petrified. Yet he can talk, and even has just written a book on the dismal science, and is an excellent fellow in every way. Fawcett, unluckily, fired up at dinner against the extreme folly of not allowing everybody to get drunk just as much as he pleases; and in short, talked Mill's 'Liberty' of the crudest kind at the top of his voice for an hour or two, till I damned all radicals as heartily as Ruskin. Lord! how stale, flat and unprofitable that kind of stuff does sound sometimes! However, Fawcett is a good fellow, and as hard-headed a man within his proper limits as I know, suits the British public to a nicety, and his election gives them great satisfaction. (Fawcett[1] said to me characteristically and quite simply the other day: 'Why does Carlyle call political economy the dismal science?' He clearly asked for information.)

25, 12, 74.

To Mr. Norton.

The ungodly and quakerish symbol which I have just written shows that it is Christmas Day, and that I do not pay it proper reverence. However, I have that much of the old leaven that I can still turn the morning to account by writing to a friend or two, and so far increasing peace and goodwill amongst mankind. . . . One Sunday I spent with a great Birmingham attorney. He gave me a gorgeous dinner and invited me to meet the great republican, Chamberlayne (or -lain), the mayor, who is a very pleasant and intelligent person in spite of his republicanism. I also met Mr. Williams, the author of that essay 'Euthanasia,' which

[1] Marginal note to 'Dismal Science.' Fawcett was elected at Hackney in April 1874.

you so nearly succeeded in appropriating.[1] He, too, was interesting, and indeed more so; but a dinner of a dozen men, filled with good wines and meats and all talking together is not favourable to the cultivation of an intimate friendship. So I was amused with the great Liberal party at Birmingham, but did not swear eternal fidelity. . . . The next day I went to dine with another rich man, to meet—of all things in the world—the judges of a poultry show—a set of fat, snuffy old gentlemen who dropped their 'h's' a great deal and took in enormous quantities of victuals at an early hour. I was really amused at being so out of my element.

Another Sunday I spent at A.B.'s, and had a long talk with him about many things including you. There is really nobody on this side of the water with whom I get on half so well. He is always right in his opinions: *i.e.*, he always agrees with me; and his only fault is that he does not smoke. That phrase reminds me that in his last 'Fors,' which I got last night, Ruskin inflicts a scratch upon that complacent person, Mr. Leslie Stephen, for saying that the Alps were improved by tobacco smoke.[2] Next time you write to him say that I (and you) forgive and pity him for raging against the blessed weed, which certainly improves the best of scenery—to the smoker; and assure him that if he would take to it himself, he would find the world look less detestable. I am afraid that he is a little angry because I had the presumption to write about him; but that was to be expected. But this is a digression. Yes, A.B. is very pleasant, and we talked a great deal about Mill's theology—that ever I should live to write the word![3] . . . I am sorry for Mill's vagaries, but it rather amuses me that the theologians have reviled his autobiography so much that they can't quote his authority to much effect on the other side. . . .

[1] An essay on 'Euthanasia' by S. D. Williams, jun., originally printed in 'Essays by Members of the Birmingham Speculative Club.' A fourth edition was published in 1873.

[2] 'Fors Clavigera,' Letter xlviii.

[3] The 'Three Essays' had lately been published.

My work has been rather sticking lately. I have been through a course of perhaps the dreariest reading in the whole of English literature—I mean 18th-century sermons. Lord! how dull they are—almost as dull, I guess, as 19th-century ditto. Indeed, they are possibly stupider in some respects, though not quite so full of lying. The best I have read are two or three of Swift's, who has a real go in him which cannot be quenched even by theology. There is a charming sermon on brotherly love, which he inculcates by saying that papists, dissenters, deists, and all moderate members of the Church of England are a set of hateful and contemptible beings, who will be damned for not loving him and his friends. But when I think that I have read Clarke and Tillotson and Sherlock and Atterbury and others, and that I still live, I am amazed at the toughness of the human constitution. And the aggravation of such work is that all the reading will only produce a single paragraph or so, to say that the said preachers are not worth reading. It is too bad to make a voyage of discovery in order to prove that the land is a desert. However, I shall have had sermons enough to last me my life. . . .

Jan. 27, 1875.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . You ask me about Carlyle, and I shall make a confession, though I fear that your comment will be that L. S. is a greater fool than you took him for. I will say first that I believe him to be well. [Carlyle has written certain articles for *Fraser*, which Allingham, who has succeeded Froude, managed to get out of him.] And here is my confession. Last May I met an Australian, who had a letter to me, and who was very anxious to see Carlyle. I said, 'I don't know T. C. well enough, but I will introduce you to Allingham, and probably A. will introduce you to the prophet.' A. did so, but introduced him as my friend. Well, I made acquaintance with a youth of some literary promise, who has been working at Knox, and was anxious to talk to

Carlyle about him.[1] I thought the old man would like to see this young Scotch zealot, and the same afternoon I met C. walking with Froude. He instantly began to blow me up about my Australian. I—rather foolishly, I must admit—took the opportunity of mentioning the youthful Scot. Hereupon the revered Thomas gave me a bit of his mind, asking why people wanted to see his wretched old carcase, &c. &c., and, though he said nothing in any sense rude, gave me the impression that he was angry with my presumption in acting the part of showman. I did not—at least I am pretty clear that I did not—take offence. If I did, I grant that I was an ass. But I did feel, and do feel, that Carlyle (and small blame to him) talked to me as he would not have talked to any one whom he liked. In short, I am convinced—or rather know—that he disapproves of my writing, and thinks me an irreverent creature; and I think further that he does not like me personally. The result has been that I have felt that I was not really welcome. I can't bear the thought of intruding upon the old man if he does not want me, and I feel that my calling would be an intrusion. He would submit to it civilly, but would wish me somewhere else. Consequently I have not called since. If he thinks about it at all, he thinks that he is well rid of a flippant scoffer. I mean to go once more to show that I am not offended, but I don't mean to go on seeing a man whom I admire and respect as much as ever, but who would—I feel sure—rather have my room than my company. . . .

(*February* 8, 1875.) I shall just wind up this document and send it off. I am going to-morrow to Edinburgh to give a couple of lectures on the Alps. How I came to be such an infernal fool as to say that I would go surpasses my present comprehension. . . . I have also been writing a couple of articles, of which I give you notice in case you care to see them. One is on Law, the call to the unconverted—he may call but I fear that I don't much regard

[1] The youth was R. L. Stevenson. *See* Graham Balfour's 'Life of Stevenson,' i. 125.

him—which will appear in the *Fortnightly*;[1] and one on H. Sidgwick's 'Methods of Ethics,' for *Fraser*.[2] . . .

EDINBURGH, *Feb.* 11, 1875.

To MR. JOHN MORLEY.

. . . I read your 'Diderot' with great pleasure.[3] . . . Would you like an article upon Godwin? . . . I think you did wrong in discouraging an article upon Farrar. . . . I am here lecturing on the Alps—a most idiotic proceeding! How I came to be such a fool as to do it, surpasses all my powers of reflection. . . . I have been greatly occupied since I saw you, in writing about Sidgwick's 'Ethics.' I think it a very weak book in substance—an everlasting bother about metaphysical puzzles that are not worth bothering over. . .

EDINBURGH [*Undated.*]

To MRS. LESLIE STEPHEN.

. . . I had an interesting visit to my poor contributor.[4] He is a miserable cripple in the infirmary, who has lost one foot and is likely to lose another—or rather hopes just to save it, and has a crippled hand besides. He has been eighteen months laid up here, and in that time has taught himself Spanish, Italian and German. He writes poems of the Swinburne kind, and reads such books as he can get hold of. I have taken one of his poems for the *Cornhill*. I went to see Stevenson this morning, Colvin's friend, and told him all about this poor creature, and am going to take him there this afternoon. He will be able to lend him books, and perhaps to read his MSS. and be otherwise useful. So I hope that my coming to Edinburgh will have done good to one living creature. . . . I suppose a few people will come to my lecture and be rewarded by a most ghastly

[1] 'William Law,' *Fortnightly*, March 1875: included in the Second Series of 'Hours in a Library,' but excluded from the revised edition of 1892.

[2] *Fraser*, March 1875: not reprinted. *See below*, p. 285.

[3] *Fortnightly*, Feb. 1875.

[4] W. E. Henley. *See* Stevenson's 'Letters,' ed. Colvin, i. 86, and Graham Balfour's 'Life of Stevenson,' i. 123.

series of anecdotes. Birkbeck's skin will make a great effect, I hope.[1] I shall assure them that I have been within an ace of destruction many times. . . .

March 3, 1875.

To Mr. Norton.

Our long waiting is over. My dear mother died a few days ago—as beautifully as she had lived. Few people, I am sure, have ever passed eighty-two years in this world with such continuous happiness. She took all the misfortunes that came to her with the most unaffected cheerfulness; and I am happy to think that she had none of the worst kind. She was proud of her husband and her children; she believed in them and loved them; she never had a day's real suffering, and had no money anxieties. I have never seen one like her to my thinking, and I suppose I never shall.

You know only too well how miserable are all the commonplaces on these occasions. I can't say that I am deeply grieved or shocked: for what could any one wish for better? I only feel that something is taken out of my life which can never come back to it, and that I am one stage nearer the end. It is as if I had lost a limb or an arm without pain. There would be no use in crying over it; but one would feel that so far the world was less happy for one.

A good old evangelical uncle of mine writes me a touching letter, saying in his pious language that he hopes that this event will make me a Christian. It won't do that; but I hope that it may help to make me a better man in some sense. That is the only good one can get out of such losses, and I don't think they are worth it. Yet there is something in the memory which is more solemn and touching than even the living presence.

June 6, 1875.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . My book is getting on. . . . You suggested the title of my essays;[2] can you give me one for my book?

[1] *See above*, p. 84.

[2] 'Free-thinking and Plain-speaking.'

[Scheme of book explained.] . . . I have thought of the following: (1) 'The English Speculative Movement of the Eighteenth Century'; (2) 'English Deism in Ditto.' Morley says that this title is too modest, even if I explain that I include by 'Deism' more than what is conventionally called deism. Would 'Theism' make matters better? (3) 'Dominant Ideas in England in the etc., a Literary History.' . . . I give you three words, if you like, but a title should not be longer.

I spent a week at Cambridge a short time ago with my wife and Laura. Lord! what a melancholy place it is after a couple of days! The whole system and organisation is rotten to the core, though some changes have been made. There is still no decent career for anybody there, and therefore the best men either leave it or run to seed at about forty. . . . And yet Cambridge is a very pleasant place for a man under thirty, and I once thought that I should never leave it. I am uncommonly glad that I did! By this time I should have been half mad or wholly. . . . A few years of such life would cover me over with blue mould. . . .

June 30, 1875.

To Mr. Norton.

I write to you because an unexpected circumstance has made it highly probable that I shall not write again for some time to come. Said circumstance is that the doctor has suddenly ordered my wife off to the Alps. . . . So off we go to-morrow, and she will be away for three months. I shall take her there, stay till the end of July, then come back for a time, leaving Miss Thackeray in my place, and return again for September. . . . My poor book will suffer. I was staggering through that slough of despond called metaphysics, and I shall forget all about it in three months, and have to plunge in once more. I take, it is true, my dear David Hume; but I know by experience that I can't do much work at a height of 5000 and odd feet. We stay at Mürren—the loveliest of all lovely places; and I daresay

that we shall be tolerably happy when there; but I dread the journey. If anything goes wrong I can blame the doctor; but I don't know that that will be any great satisfaction. . . .

Aug. 8, 1875.

To Mr. Norton.

I came home last night having to settle some business here. I go back to the Alps in ten days or so. . . . My wife, I am glad to say, is very much better than I had hoped. . . . The glorious Alps, besides all their other virtues, have done her good. . . . I took David [Hume] to the Alps, but I read not a word of him. I don't think that many people have my talent for absolute idleness on occasion. . . . I had one adventure, much against my will—the adventure of being nearly struck by lightning. If I had been six yards to my left (which by the way sounds like a bull) I should have tried an electric shock on a grand scale. It made me jump, as you may guess. . . . I must work hard these ten days, and then I shall go and have another delicious plunge into the Alps. I never thought England so hideous as I do to-day.

Oct. 22, 1875.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . My Swiss tour was a grand success. My wife throve. . . . It always gives me a thrill of delight to find that my legs have not yet given in. I can still go up a mountain and hold my own with aspiring youths of a later growth; and I love the mountains more than ever. . . .

I shall polish off the Deists, I hope, before Christmas, and you shall have a copy of that publication. Lord! how bad it sometimes seems to me! But that can't be helped, and if I were satisfied, I should be a fool. That is the correct sentiment and, after all, I, like other writers, have a certain solid substratum of vanity which can crop up when required. Meanwhile I look forward with more interest to a child of a more literal kind. My wife

is going on well, and we have no reason that I know of for anxiety. . . .

But in truth there was reason for anxiety. The blow fell suddenly. There was no warning. On November 28 Mrs. Leslie Stephen died. The few words that follow I owe to Leslie's sister: 'She had a singular and indescribable social charm—a humorous, wayward and changeful grace, which captivated not only for the moment but for life, because its freshness was so unmistakeably the outcome of transparent sincerity. She was, beyond any one I have known, quaintly picturesque, tender and true. She could never have been put into intellectual harness, but there was a rare sureness and delicacy in her critical intuitions, whether as to personal or literary qualities. Her own pen, though sparingly used, had a felicity worthy of her parentage. But what comes back most vividly in one's memory of her is the native half playful motherliness of her household ways, which was both amusing and pathetic in the youngest and most fragile of the little family party. It is good to remember that for the last five years of her life she tasted the purest delight of motherhood through her own child. Altogether the eight years of their married life were a spring-time of beauty and gladness for both.'

Dec. 25, 1875.

To Mr. John Morley.

My dear Morley,—We came safely [from Brighton] to our desolate home last night, and your most kind little note appeared a few hours later. I had been thinking of sending you a word, and now feel that I must say a little of what I have thought and am thinking.

I regretted like you that we had not had a little more personal talk. The chief fault in such cases must be with the sufferer, for he ought to lead the way. I quite understood your feeling, and you, I know, will understand the shyness or the dread of emotion which hindered me from speaking more freely. There was, however, one thing

which I did wish to say distinctly, and which somehow never got itself expressed. I will try to say it once for all.

In this grievous sorrow one develops a strange ingenuity in discovering new modes of self-torture; but one only discovers two or three soothing thoughts. Some thoughts are too sacred to be uttered even to one's dearest friends. One, however, is obvious, and may be worth expressing. It is that the grief which opens one's heart, brings one into closer sympathy with the few people outside our little family circle whom one can call friends. I shall remember you henceforth as a man who has been through a cruel operation would remember the kind friend who stood by and spoke words of encouragement and affection. Words can in one sense do nothing in such cases, but they, or the sentiments which they express, stamp themselves most deeply on one's heart. . . .

It seems to me as if nobody ever was so loving and so honest to herself and others. I feel as if I could only honour such affection by being as cheerful and brave as I can be. It always seemed to her and to me to be morbid to make a luxury of grief; and grief for one so noble should be itself ennobling. The pang will be deadened with time. I shall try to keep alive the feeling which I always had most strongly when nearest to her, the feeling that a life can be made beautiful by sincerity and love, whether the vulgar forms of success are present or absent.

Perhaps I have said too much of this: what I meant was to say that I have still much left to me, if I can take it in the right way. There is my little girl and my sister-in-law, who is the most affectionate and sympathetic woman I ever knew, and my own sister. . . . And outside of the inmost circle I have two or three friends whom I shall cherish more than ever. Men don't often make declarations of affection, and it is best not; but I may for once use the privilege of deep sorrow, and say that I value your friendship as highly as any man's, and hope that you and

I may hold together as long as we are in this queer world. . . . Miss Thackeray sends her very kindest regards.

Ever yours,
L. S.

You date on your birthday. I send all appropriate good wishes. My birthday was last Sunday three weeks [Nov. 28], the saddest day I have ever known, or ever can know.

Into the grief we will not pry. Upon the tombstone some Alpine flowers were carved. 'It was done by a poor little Italian sculptor, cheaply and I guess not very artistically. Yet I liked the thought, and I like the stone. Some of the flowers are cyclamens. We had brought home some roots of the purple sweet-scented cyclamen from Primiero, and I have always loved them since, and taken them as a kind of emblem. . . . I only know that the sweet, delicately formed shy little cyclamen, nestling in the Alpine meadow under the great cliffs, somehow represents her for me.'[1]

Two or three words from a letter to Lowell: 'I thank—something—that I loved her as heartily as I know how to love, that I would have died for her with pleasure, and that (still more) I scarcely ever saw a cloud upon her bright face. The mere memory of her smile is like sunshine to me. I reproach myself at times for the bothers I gave her by occasional fits of ill-temper or nervous anxiety; but she knew how I loved her, and I dare to believe that I made her happy. . . . Well, as long as I can work and help two or three people near me, I can feel life tolerable; but the old charm is gone.'

[1] Written in 1895.

XIII

CORNHILL AND SCHRECKHORN

(1871–1882)

Upon what has been told in the foregoing chapters by means of Stephen's letters to his friends, little comment seems necessary ; but we may underline a few dates. A projected treatise upon political theory disappears from our view after his visit to America in 1868. He had hoped that a good deal of it would be written there ; but his American friends were too hospitable. We observe, however, that even in the study at Elmwood, if he sits down to write an article, it is of the political and ecclesiastical condition of England that he writes. When he is once more on this side of the sea, he works hard, and utters himself profusely in the *Saturday*, *Pall Mall*, *Cornhill*, *Fraser*, *Fortnightly*. He thinks at times that he ought to be producing something more permanent than ephemeral articles, but on the whole he is not discontented with journalism. At the beginning of 1871 he was offered the editorship of *Fraser*. 'I consulted,' so he afterwards wrote, 'George Smith, who thereupon offered me the *Cornhill*, which I accepted the more willingly from its connection with Thackeray.' Thackeray's daughters, so his mother remarked and we may easily believe, were greatly pleased. The first number that Leslie edited was that for March 1871. 'Though the pay was not magnificent, it enabled me to give up some of my journalism, and to set about a book—the so-called History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century.' Stephen soon began to like his new editorial work ; but I do not think that it was exactly what he would at that time have chosen for himself. A friend who congratulated

him upon his appointment, says that the reply was: 'What can one make of a magazine which excludes the only subjects in which reasonable men take any interest: politics and religion?' This may lead to a remark upon one point in his character.

'The little pig was so comforting to me because he was wholly content to be a little pig; and Mr. Leslie Stephen is in a certain degree exemplary and comforting to me, because he is wholly content to be Mr. Leslie Stephen; while I am miserable because I am always wanting to be something else than I am.' So wrote Ruskin;[1] but let us distinguish. If the prophet meant that Stephen was self-complacent and satisfied with his own performances, the prophet made a great mistake; but if he meant that Stephen was contented with his lot, that is true and worth saying. He had, I think, inherited from his mother at least one element of a happy disposition, and this comes out in what in his letters he frequently says about any lot that has been his, but is his no longer. Life at Cambridge was thoroughly agreeable until he ceased to live there; whereupon the university became covered with blue mould. By 1875 there was hardly a newspaper in England that was fit to read. As to English politics, they became always more wearisome as the editor of the *Cornhill* 'stumbled into' literary criticism and found that many people would gladly share with him his hours in a library. Something should perhaps be added of the course taken by the political stream. Its pace was not so swift as an impatient radical had expected. It shot Niagara, but then it meandered once more in the old, aimless, unprincipled way. Gladstone was disappointing, the church was not more than usually in danger, and, when Fawcett mutinied, Stephen looked on—or even ceased to look on—for in 1874 an intent onlooker would have known how to spell Mr. Chamberlain's name.[2] But though a few words about the political environment might properly be inserted at this point, and would be in Stephen's own biographical manner, they should

[1] 'Fors Clavigera,' Letter xlviii.

[2] *See* above p. 246, 'Chamberlayne (or -lain).'

be few and unemphatic. Nor need it be said that Stephen had a much more serious call to history, biography, and literary criticism than to current politics; only I can imagine that call unheard, for Stephen was content with whatever kind of work he had to do: so content that he would pour scorn of a humorous, discountable sort upon any other employment.

Before his wife's death he had published the 'Playground' (1871), the 'Essays in Free-thinking' (1873), and a volume of 'Hours in a Library' (1874). A second volume of 'Hours' was almost ready, and the 'so-called History of English Thought' was nearly finished. About the 'Hours' he was nervous. He hoped, so he said, that he had hit upon 'a good style of article,' but was by no means certain, and required all the encouragement that came from Lowell. It came in the pleasantest way, for Lowell had been reading some of these essays with approbation before he knew whose they were.[1] I may observe that Stephen did not earn compliments by flattery. This, I think, will be sufficiently apparent from what in divers letters he says of Lowell's poetry. A commencing critic ought not, I should suppose, to expect that he will soon be famous; but I believe that by 1876 Stephen was satisfying some excellent judges. Fitzgerald, for instance, had been offended by the essay on Crabbe, and had called its author a jackanapes; but in 1876 he wrote thus: 'One of the books I have here is Leslie Stephen's "Hours in a Library," really delightful reading, and, I think, really settling some Questions of Criticism, as one wants to be finally done in all Cases, so as to have no more about and about it. I think I could have suggested a little Alteration in the matter of this Crabbe, whom I probably am better up in than L. S., though I certainly could not write about it as he does. Also, one word about *Clarissa*. Almost all the rest of the two Volumes I accept as a Disciple.'[2]

The 'Essays on Free-thinking and Plain-speaking' were dedicated to Mr. Norton, who had suggested the title. The earliest of them had been published in 1870. In 1878 Stephen

[1] 'Letters of J. R. Lowell,' ii. 141, 185.

[2] 'Letters of Edward Fitzgerald to Fanny Kemble,' pp 59, 119.

wrote thus to Mr. Norton : 'I was amused to see a review in the *Nation* of my 'Freethinking, &c.' I did not read it very carefully ; but it was, I thought, very adequate to the performance. I seem to have lived out of the whole state of mind in which I wrote those essays ; and, though I should not differ, I suppose, from the general sentiment, I fancy the book would now strike me as very crude and unsatisfactory. I shall not read it again, however, just yet, having other irons in the fire. The history of the American edition is simply that Putnam (I think it was) bought up the end of the English edition, some two or three hundred copies, which the public here have had the bad taste to leave on hand. So I am nearly out of print, but I fear in no hopes of a second edition. If there were such a possibility, I do not think that I should take advantage of it.' By 1878 another set of essays, of the same general character, was appearing : those, namely, that now bear the title, 'An Agnostic's Apology.' In his last days Stephen was asked for a cheap edition of the older book, but preferred that there should be a cheap edition of his maturer work. His choice will be approved by most people, especially as in the interval three of the old essays—those on Shaftesbury, Mandeville, and Warburton—had been used up in his book on the 'Eighteenth Century.' Since his death 'Free-thinking' has been republished in America : and rightly, so I think, for the 'Bad Five Minutes' was too good to be lost.[1] Be that as it may, from the time that he left Cambridge until the hour of his death, Stephen, as I can see from many letters, was deeply in earnest about the duty of plain-speaking, and found himself very much alone : that is to say, in this matter he could not count upon the sympathy even of close friends. Late in life he took some blame to himself for the manner in which he had expressed his convictions. 'I have often enough,' he said, 'spoken too harshly and vehemently of my antagonists. I have tried to fix upon them too unreservedly what seemed to me the logical con-

[1] 'Essays on Free-thinking and Plain-speaking,' by Leslie Stephen, with Introductory Essays on Leslie Stephen and his Works by James Bryce and Herbert Paul (G. P. Putnam's Sons), 1905.

sequences of their dogmas. I have condemned their attempts at a milder interpretation of their creed as proofs of insincerity, when I ought to have done more justice to the legitimate and lofty motives which prompted them.'[1] Now I will not say that there was no need for this 'brief confession.' Stephen was vehement, and at this time by no means devoid of pugnacity; but, after reading what he signed, and a good deal of what (owing to the fashions of the journals for which he wrote) he did not sign, it does not appear to me that he had more cause for penitence than have most divines—to say nothing of politicians—who have heard and obeyed the call to battle. To the best of my knowledge, he never published of any antagonist words as harsh as some that have been thrown at him from the pulpit. What he chiefly regretted in later life was, I believe, that he had given pain to some of those who loved and reverenced Frederick Maurice.[2] Some references to controversy with Mauricians have been seen in the foregoing letters; but, so far as I know, Stephen never published a line condemnatory of Maurice's logic without expressing also his belief in Maurice's absolute sincerity ('as honest a man as ever lived')[3] and his admiration of Maurice's saintly life. Of various divines and freethinkers and others Stephen wrote in his private letters sentences that he would not have printed: to say so is needless, for every human being who writes letters does the like. If I have given a few of these outbursts, it is because no side of his character is to be concealed; but it must be remembered that they were intended only for those who well knew his habit of humorous exaggeration. Also we must not forget that this same Stephen has been accused of being insufficiently outspoken.[4]

[1] 'Social Rights and Duties,' i. p. 4.

[2] *See* the 'Life of F. D. Maurice,' by his son, ed. 2, vol. ii. pp 328, 536. As regards what is said on the second of these pages, I think it probable, or more than probable, that Stephen somewhat mis-stated Maurice's doctrine; but also it seems to me, after such search as I can make, that the biographer has somewhat mis-stated Stephen's statement. In both cases the mistake is of a venial kind.

[3] *Nation*, xiv. 272.

[4] *See* Mr. J. M. Robertson's 'Buckle and his Critics,' p. 62, and divers other passages in Mr. Robertson's works.

It is difficult to satisfy all tastes in these matters, nor, happily, is it easy for most of us to recall the time when what was but a choleric word on the lips of the orthodox, became flat blasphemy when it proceeded from the 'infidel.' Stephen was not, I think, very far gone in 'infidelity'—not much, if at all, further than are many clergymen of the present day—when he was told that his heterodoxy would have a harmful effect upon the morals of undergraduates. Such a remark might well persuade him that some people's orthodoxy was 'noxious and bumptious' But recriminations are odious. Let us enjoy the cool of the evening. The day was hot.

Before the end of 1871 a more important book was beginning to shape itself in Stephen's mind: an essay on the deistic movement, ultimately to become the 'History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century.' Of this we will say a word hereafter, for, if begun in his happiest days, it was finished in his saddest, or almost his saddest. But here we may note that the inception of a task that would require long hours among books that are not of the most attractive order, nearly coincided with another event. A child was born. The father began to discover that he was in the highest degree a domestic animal, and that the cult of hearth and home was his true religion. Only a small part of the 'baby worship' which overflows into his letters has been revealed by our extracts; and there was anxiety too, for the child was born prematurely, and required great care. However, what has here to be remarked is that Stephen already begins to be somewhat of a recluse, dislikes dinner-parties, rarely goes to the theatre, has thoughts of leaving London, and even of settling at Geneva or Zurich. Old Cambridge friends complain that they must dig him out if they want to see him, and, as will soon appear, young men of letters, who send articles to the *Cornhill*, think him awful and gloomy, and probably do not suspect that out in Switzerland among genial souls he can still condescend to the levity of 'fly loo.' That he should have a playground had become important, for, as the story of his youth will have taught us, there was a weak spot in his equipment, which spot would be laid bare by hard thinking and

incessant writing. Protracted headaches already gave trouble. New friends could still be made, and very fast friends: Mr. Morley, for example, and Mr. Norton, and M. Loppé; but those who wished to know Stephen had to seek him in his study, where the books of the deists were accumulating.

That study, after the spring of 1873, was a large room, planned by himself, at the top of a new house in Southwell Gardens. Of this 'Stylites study,' Lowell said that it was 'the one place in the wilderness of London where I felt thoroughly at home. I was somehow an American everywhere else, but there I was a friend, and so far, you know, it was a foretaste of Heaven.' [1] M. Loppé, who in 1874, was exhibiting his pictures in London, remembers this same exalted chamber. 'Il travaillait beaucoup le soir quand tout le monde chez lui allait se reposer. Sur un signal convenu [was it not a *Jodel?*] il descendait et m'ouvrait la porte d'entrée. Jusqu'à minuit passé nous causions surtout des montagnes, nous projetions des courses, nous parlions de nos séjours dans ces belles vallées de l'Oberland Bernois et du Mont Rose, et c'était une précieuse distraction au milieu de la vie agitée d'une grande ville. Pendant plus de trente ans il n'y eut jamais la moindre ombre d'oubli ou d'indifférence dans nos relations si franches et si familières.'

Another scene in the same study may be described by the pen of Mr. Thomas Hardy, whose 'Far from the Madding Crowd' had been delighting both the editor and the readers of the *Cornhill*. 'One day [March 23, 1875], I received from Stephen a mysterious note asking me to call in the evening, as late as I liked. I went, and found him alone, wandering up and down his library in slippers; his tall thin figure wrapt in a heath-coloured dressing-gown. After a few remarks on our magazine arrangements, he said he wanted me to witness his signature to what, for a moment, I thought was his will; but it turned out to be a deed renunciatory of holy orders, under the Act of 1870. He said grimly that he was really a reverend gentleman still, little as he might look it, and that he thought it as well to cut himself adrift of a calling for

[1] 'Letters of J. R. Lowell,' ii. 188.

which, to say the least, he had always been utterly unfit. The deed was executed with due formality. Our conversation then turned upon theologies decayed and defunct, the origin of things, the constitution of matter, the unreality of time and kindred subjects. He told me that he had "wasted" much time on systems of religion and metaphysics, and that the new theory of vortex rings had a "staggering fascination" for him.' This scene—I need not say it—is well drawn. A tall, thin figure wrapt in a heath-coloured dressing-gown was what one saw if one climbed to the 'Stylites study' at dead of night. Stevenson's phrase—at least I believe it is Stevenson's—'long Leslie Stephen in the velveteen coat'—this also is good.

Stephen edited the *Cornhill* from 1871 to 1882. I do not know that there is much to be said of his editorship, except that any volume of his time which is taken from the shelf seems to contain a surprisingly large amount of still readable matter. 'It may safely be asserted'—I quote from a good judge, Dr. Ward, now Master of Peterhouse—'that from Thackeray's day to our own no English magazine has been so liberally interfused with literary criticism of a high class, and at the same time remained such pleasant reading, as the *Cornhill*, under Stephen's management.'[1] Mr. Frederic Harrison, after penetrating behind the veil of anonymity, has written thus: 'What I wish to call attention to is the great body of excellent and permanent literature which the *Cornhill Magazine* contained during Stephen's time as editor. These included 'Literature and Dogma,'[2] and several essays by Matthew Arnold, poems by R. Browning, W. M. Thackeray (posthumous), Sir F. Doyle and Alfred Austin. There were romances by George Meredith, Miss Thackeray, Erckmann-Chatrian, Charles Lever, Mrs. Oliphant, W. Black, R. D. Blackmore, Thomas Hardy, Henry James, Mrs. Lynn Linton and James Payn. . . . But that of which the public is perhaps less aware is the great number of essays contributed

[1] *Manchester Guardian*, Feb. 23, 1904. I am allowed to identify the author of this admirable appreciation of Stephen's work with Dr. A. W. Ward

[2] Not all of it.

by R. L. Stevenson and W. E. Henley.'[1] The name of J. A. Symonds should certainly not be omitted; nor those of James Thomson, Richard Proctor and Grant Allen, and I see the initials of men who now stand high among our critics. The editor himself contributed not only the long series of 'Hours,' but many other papers as well—full twenty, I think. I give a few titles: 'Heroes and Valets,' 'Genius and Vanity,' 'Art and Morality,' 'Thoughts on Criticism,' 'Humour,' and 'London Walks.' His *Cornhill* style was, so some readers thought, a very pleasant style. They will understand Mr. George Meredith's word: 'The only sting in it was an inoffensive humorous irony that now and then stole out for a roll over, like a furry cub, or the occasional ripple on a lake in grey weather.'[2] Also there is point in the phrase, 'gentlemanly in its felicities and in its laxities.'[3] Stephen never 'bothered' about style, and was inclined to think that any 'bothering' about style was a sign of weakness. He had his likes and dislikes. Thus 'personality' for 'person' would drive him wild. Such was his disgust for a French word in an English sentence, that I am proud of having caught him using *éloge* in his old age. He told me that he had tried hard to keep out of the Dictionary such phrases as 'he was given an appointment,' 'he was awarded the prize'; and he pointed with pride to the 'Do not ring unless an answer be required,' that was visible upon his front door; but I doubt he had thought profoundly of the subjunctive. As will be seen in his letters, a lapse into slang was pleasant to him, and, I think that the more he wrote for the public, the pleasanter such lapses became: they were comforting as are slippers to weary feet. We may be tempted to say that the round and sonorous periods of Sir James Stephen had repelled his youngest son to the other pole, though the mixture of doctrine and biography that we find in the 'History of English Thought' and the 'Utilitarians' looks like a paternal inheritance. Leslie, as we shall see by-and-by, found fault with his own 'short-windedness.' 'The wind of a Tutor of Trinity Hall' was

[1] *Cornhill*, April 1904, p. 440. [2] *The Author*, April 1, 1904.
[3] J. M. Robertson: 'Essays Towards a Critical Method' (1889), p. 95.

not for all purposes a long wind. But we have wandered too far from the *Cornhill*.

In one sense the last years of Stephen's management were not successful, and George Smith had at length to disclose to him the unwelcome news that financially the magazine was on the downward road. To that part of the story we shall come hereafter. Changes of taste among readers of magazines we must not endeavour to explain: they are a large subject; we will merely observe that to the end Stephen was offering the public some very good matter; and in particular a great deal of Stevenson. He could not boast—certainly he did not boast—that he had made any great discoveries; still he could say with truth that he had given a helping hand to divers commencing authors of great ability, and his conscience did not accuse of any hideous crime, such as the suffocation of a genius. One of his boldest ventures, I imagine, was the acceptance of Henley's 'Hospital Outlines.'[1] 'Thou shalt not shock a young lady,' was, he said, the first commandment that he had to enforce. We are more surprised at seeing some part of 'Literature and Dogma' in the pages of the *Cornhill*, than at not seeing the residue.[2] To keep all the strings muted was irksome to the conductor. When Mr. Sully wrote of Pessimism, he was told that he had better not mention Schopenhauer. 'The ordinary person, who is the general object of my dread, has never heard of Schopenhauer, but he may vaguely scent infidelity in a German name.' Such were noses in the Mid-Victorian age. Of the muting of another string, Mr. Thomas Hardy will tell us something, and no doubt, in Mr. Hardy's case, what Stephen did was done most unwillingly; still the following words from a letter, written in 1867, will show us that the editor of the *Cornhill* was not likely to sympathise with all revolts against English traditions.

> You say you have been reading some French novels lately. I am much given to that amusement, though I have never read De Musset. By the way, I don't quite

[1] *Cornhill*, July 1875. [2] *Cornhill*, July, October 1871.

agree with your praise of them. Of course it is true that English writers—Thackeray conspicuously so—are injured by being cramped as to love in its various manifestations. Still I doubt whether the French gain much by the opposite system. To say the truth, much as I like reading them, and specially Balzac and Sand, and little as I am given to over-strictness in my tastes, I do believe that the commonplace criticism is correct. I think that, as a rule, they are prurient and indecent. . . . They are very clever and very artistic ; but I don't think them delicate either in the sense of art or of morals. They are always hankering and sniffing after sensual motives, and I consider them far inferior to English writers in colour—in descriptions of character especially. The books are put together with great skill to produce a given effect ; but the effect is apt to border on the nasty, and they are too anxious to keep everything in due harmony to give the proper contrasts and reality of real life. Consequently within given limits—and the limits are certainly too narrow—I consider the love-making of English novelists to be purer and more life-like. This touches certain theories or, if you like, crotchets of mine, on which I could be voluminous.

Though this is criticism in undress, it sufficiently indicates an opinion that Stephen maintained to the end of his life, and, I may add, an aversion which was strong and which expressed itself in language of biblical strength. He had little 'regard for appearances,' but a deep regard for realities, and the morals of the British public would have been quite safe in the hands of the man who wrote the 'Science of Ethics,' even if those hands had been unfettered.[1]

But the reader would gladly have a few reminiscences from contributors to the *Cornhill*, and I can offer a few. First there is Mr. Edmund Gosse :

[1] *See* an article on 'Art and Morality,' *Cornhill*, July 1875. In his last days Stephen was a great devourer of French novels, and would, I believe, have put the average French novel above the average English novel ; but any 'hankering and sniffing after sensual motives' repelled him.

'The first time I saw Stephen was, I believe, early in the spring of 1875. I began to write for the *Cornhill* in 1874, about the same time as R. L. Stevenson did. In an early letter I remember that Stephen, replying to a question of mine, answered, 'R. L. S. is not the Real Leslie Stephen, as some of my friends insist, but a young Scotchman whom Colvin has discovered.' Meanwhile, being down at Edinburgh, Leslie Stephen, in his well-known black velvet jacket, called on R. L. S. But I had never seen him, when, on the occasion, I recall, Stevenson and I were invited to dine with him. We anticipated—I cannot imagine why—a large collection of literary notabilities, and, in our eagerness, we were hanging about, outside the house, some time before we could present ourselves. But we were the only guests. Leslie Stephen sat at one end of the table, his wife at the other, Miss Annie Thackeray opposite to us two lads. I shall always remember the surprise Leslie Stephen's appearance gave me; the long, thin, bright-red beard, radiating in a fan-shape; the wrinkled forehead; the curious flatness of the top of the head, accentuated by the fulness of the auburn hair on either side; the long cold hands; the distraught and melancholy eyes. The dinner was extremely quiet. Scarcely a word fell from either of the Stephens, and we two guests, although chatterboxes engrained, were subdued to silence by shyness. Only Miss Thackeray, in her hospitable goodness, did her best to talk for us all, and in the twilight—for the room and table were meagrely illuminated by two or three candles—her voice was heard, holding a sort of dialogue with itself.'

'It is characteristic, perhaps, of the impression which he always produced, that this almost unbroken silence of our host—who for a considerable part of the time lay far back in his chair, motionless, with his beard on his bosom—though it greatly disconcerted, did not offend or wound either of us at all. There was something so genuine about Leslie Stephen, something essentially so kind and good, that, although it was disappointing not to be talked to, it was not humiliating. We (R. L. S. and I) were taken, I recollect, half-way through the meal, with a terrible simultaneous temptation to giggle,

which we withstood; and then for the rest of the evening we waited patiently for the heavenly spark to fall. But it only fell upon kind Miss Thackeray.'

Mrs. Oliphant met Stephen at Grindelwald in the last happy summer (1875) that he spent among the Alps. The few lines that follow give, I think, a good impression of him with a background of mountains:

'I made acquaintance with Mr. Leslie Stephen at that time—a man with whom I had had a slight passage of arms by letters about some literary work, he being the editor of the *Cornhill*, a prosperous magazine in those days. I fell into a chance talking with him in front of the "Bear," when the sky was growing dim over the Wetterhorn, and the shadows of the mountains drawing down, as they do when night is coming on. I recollect we walked up and down and talked, I have not the smallest remembrance what about. But the end was that when I went in we had become friends, or so it was at least on my side. . . . Leslie Stephen was kind to the boys, taking them for walks with him among the mountains; and he was so far kind to me that he took two of my stories for the *Cornhill*, which meant in each case the bulk of a year's income.'[1]

Another witness is Mr. Sully.[2] 'The first meeting was under somewhat trying circumstances. Some one, probably [George Henry] Lewes, had given me an introduction to [Stephen], and I called on him to discuss possibilities of work for the *Cornhill*. . . . Stephen had recently lost his wife, and I was warned that I might find him a melancholy recluse. His accost had in it, behind its evident cordiality, a touch of awkwardness, as if he were forcing himself to forget the books left behind The memory of his low, winsome voice, and of the first of his many kind words of encouragement still comes back to me. I wrote for the *Cornhill* from that day until he ceased to be its editor. He seemed to me the most considerate of editors—almost too timid, some would have said,

[1] 'Autobiography and Letters of Mrs. Oliphant,' ed. 3, p. 134. *See also* pp. 211, 213, 218.

[2] *Atlantic Monthly*, March 1905, p. 351.

before the unpleasant necessity of rejecting a manuscript, or of asking a contributor to shorten an article, and ever ready to take a kindly and helpful interest in the younger men who assisted him.' Stephen's voice was 'low,' I should say, in both senses of the word : it ranged over notes far down in the scale, and its force rarely touched *mf*, except, of course, in staccato passages. As Mr. Gosse has mentioned his eyes, and an engraving cannot give their colour, be it known that they were bright blue. They recalled to some of his friends two passages in a famous novel. 'Do you know,' said young Crossjay, 'what he makes me think of ?—his eyes I mean. He makes me think of Robinson Crusoe's old goat in the cavern. I like him because he's always the same, and you're not positive about some people.' That is one passage ; the other is this : 'He treated her to a level scrutiny of deep-set eyes unpleasantly penetrating. They became unbearable ; they dwelt in the memory as if they had left a phosphorescent line.' All the same, 'she' fell in love with 'him,' and we are digressing.

Other pleasant shreds of testimony might be collected and I have happed upon nothing unpleasant. There is, for instance, this word of Stevenson's : 'I have received such a nice long letter (four sides) from Leslie Stephen to-day, [May 1874] about my Victor Hugo. It is accepted.'[1] But I am anxious that Mr. Thomas Hardy should speak. An apology for speaking of himself as well as of Stephen I suppress as unnecessary, and it will be allowed that I was happy when I asked for notes and drew a poem.

'It was at the beginning of December 1872, on a wet and windy morning, when in a remote part of the country, that a letter stained with rain-drops arrived for me in a handwriting so fine that it might have been traced by a pin's point.'

> Dear Sir,—I hear from Mr. Moule that I may address you as the author of 'Under the Greenwood Tree.'[2]

[1] 'Letters of R. L. Stevenson,' ii. 77. *See also* 'Grant Allen,' by Edward Clodd, pp. 65, 66 ; 'Life of James Thomson,' by H. S. Salt, pp. 173, 174.

[2] I have been told that Stephen's attention had been called to Mr. Hardy's novel by Mr. Frederick Greenwood.

I have lately read that story with very great pleasure indeed. I think the description of country life admirable, and, indeed, it is long since I have received more pleasure from a new writer.

It also occurred to me, and it is for this reason that I take the liberty of addressing you, that such writing would probably please the readers of the *Cornhill Magazine* as much as it has pleased me. 'Under the Greenwood Tree' is, of course, not a magazine story. There is too little incident for such purpose; for, though I do not want a murder in every number, it is necessary to catch the attention of readers by some distinct and well-arranged plot.

If you are, as I hope, writing anything more, I should be very glad to have the offer of it for our pages. . . .

Yours truly,

Leslie Stephen.

'A reply that I could send him, when free—though that would not be for some time—a pastoral tale which I thought of calling "Far from the Madding Crowd," in which the chief characters would be a woman-farmer, a shepherd, and a sergeant in the Dragoon Guards, brought another letter immediately. He said that the idea of the story attracted him, that he liked my proposed title for it, and that he hoped I would call and talk it over when next I came to town. An understanding having been come to by a further note or two that he should have the story if all went well (not a word of it being written as yet), no more passed between us then; and I had nothing from him till the April of next year (1873) when he inquired again:

'"Since I wrote to you last, circumstances have occurred which make it desirable for me to ask whether the novel of which you then spoke to me is in a sufficiently advanced state to allow of my seeing it with a view to its appearance in the *Cornhill*, and if so, at what time you would be able to let me publish the first number. It would not be necessary to have the whole story before beginning. . . . You

spoke of coming to town in the spring. If you should be here I should be very glad to see you."

'If I went up, however, I did not call, and must have replied that the MS. was very little advanced (the preceding story, "A Pair of Blue Eyes," being barely finished), for later he says :

> '"Since I wrote, arrangements have been nearly concluded which will, I think, obviate any necessity for hurrying you. . . . I should like to see a specimen of your story before I go abroad, which will be in the middle either of June or July—most likely the latter."

'In writing that I would endeavour to show him something of it before he left, I mentioned that I had just read an article of his in the current *Fortnightly Review*,[1] and he alluded to it in his next : "I am gratified by your approbation of my *Fortnightly* article. I have some more to say upon that matter in a forthcoming volume, which will, I fear or hope, shock the orthodox." As soon, therefore, as I could, I forwarded a few chapters of the story, with some succeeding ones in outline, which, briefly, he was pleased to characterise in terms that, coming from such a quarter, were more eulogistic than I was aware of. He hoped I should hurry on "the elopement of the heroine" (which I had foreshadowed), and added a personal sentence : "I am going abroad on Thursday or Friday next for a couple of months, being a good deal overworked and worried." He was back again in South Kensington by September, and I sent on a few more chapters, written out at length, so that altogether he had about enough matter to make a first number, with something over. He replied thereon : "I think that, so far as it has gone, it will suit us admirably. As a rule, it is desirable that I should see the whole MS. of a novel before definitely accepting it. Under the circumstances, however, and as I should wish to

[1] 'Are We Christians?' appeared in the *Fortnightly* for March 1873 : reprinted in 'Freethinking.'

begin the publication of your novel before long, it may be desirable to decide at once."'

'When I had come to terms with the publishers by an exchange of letters, he wanted to know whether, if he began to issue the story in the coming January number (which was sooner than previously proposed) I could keep in front of the printers month by month. I said I thought I could do so, and he sent the first number on to them, asking me to let him have the second soon, and again inviting me to come and see him, as I was about to run up to town, suggesting lunch-time.'

'I called, however, at some other hour; and on that day, owing to my remissness in not going sooner as he had wished, we met for the first time at 8 Southwell Gardens. He welcomed me with one hand, holding back the barking "Troy" with the other. The dog's name I, of course, had never heard till then, and I said, "That is the name of my wicked soldier-hero." He answered caustically: "I don't think my Troy will feel hurt at the coincidence, if yours doesn't." I rejoined, "There is also another coincidence. Another Leslie Stephen lives near here, I find." "Yes," he said, "he's the spurious one."'

'Perceiving, what I had not gathered from his letters, that I had a character to deal with, I made some cheerful reply, and tried him further. We were looking out of the window, and I asked him what made him live in such a new street (he had lately removed thither), with pavements hardly laid, and the road-stones not rolled in. He said he had played as a child with his nurse in the fields hard by, and he fancied living on the spot, which was dear to him, though the building operations interfered with the sentiment much. I felt then that I liked him, which at first I had doubted The feeling never changed.'

'I agreed to lunch on the next day, and arrived in a yellow fog which ate into the very bones. Mrs. Stephen and Miss Thackeray were present in shawls. We sat over the fire after lunch, and the closeness of the printers in the rear of my pen led Stephen to remark that "Vanity Fair" was written at the rate

of five pages a day, "The Newcomes" at the rate of ten, and "Esmond" (I think) at the rate of three. We also talked of Carlyle, whom Stephen had visited on the previous day; and he illustrated by enactment the remarkable way in which the philosopher lit his pipe. Somehow we launched upon the subject of David and Saul. One of the ladies said that her best idea of Saul's character had been gained from Browning's poem of that name. I spoke to the effect that the Bible account would take a deal of beating, and that I wondered why the clergy did not argue the necessity of plenary inspiration from the marvellous artistic cunning with which so many Bible personages, like those of Saul and David, were developed, though in a comparatively unliterary age. Stephen, who had been silent, then said, "Yes. But they never do the obvious thing"; presently adding in a dry grim tone, "If you wish to get an idea of Saul and David you should study them as presented by Voltaire in his drama." Those who know that work will appreciate Stephen's mood.'

'He was pleased with the reception, in January, of "Far from the Madding Crowd," and wrote to congratulate me. "Besides the gentle *Spectator*," he says, "who thinks you must be George Eliot, because you know the names of the stars, several good judges have . . . Moreover, the *Spectator* has really a good deal of critical feeling. I always like to be praised by it—and, indeed, by other people!" A week later he alludes to the same review: "I have been waiting for castigation at their hands for certain essays of mine,[1] but they have not yet condescended to mention me. I suppose the rod is in pickle."'

"'I have ventured to leave out a line or two in the last batch of proofs," he wrote soon afterwards, "from an excessive prudery of which I am ashamed; but one is forced to be absurdly particular. May I suggest that Troy's seduction of the young woman will require to be treated in a gingerly fashion when, as I suppose must be the case, he comes to be exposed to his wife? I mean that the thing must be stated, but that

[1] 'Free-thinking and Plain-speaking.' In the *Spectator* of Jan. 3, 1874, the new novel is with great confidence ascribed to George Eliot.—(F. W. M.)

the words must be careful. Excuse this wretched shred of concession to popular stupidity; but I am a slave. I hope to see you soon." I wondered what had so suddenly caused in one, who had seemed anything but a prude, the "excessive prudery" alluded to. But I did not learn till I saw him in April. Then he told me that an unexpected Grundian cloud, though no bigger than a man's hand as yet, had appeared on our serene horizon. Three respectable ladies and subscribers, representing he knew not how many more, had written to upbraid him for an improper passage in a page of the story which had already been published.'

'I was struck mute, till I said, "Well, if you value the opinion of such people, why didn't you think of them beforehand, and strike out the passage?" "I ought to have, since it is their opinion, whether I value it or no," he said with a half groan. "But it didn't occur to me that there was anything to object to!" I reminded him that though three objectors who disliked the passage, or pretended to, might write their disapproval, three hundred who possibly approved of it would not take the trouble to write, and hence he might have a false impression of the public as a body. "Yes; I agree. Still I suppose I ought to have foreseen these gentry, and have omitted it," he murmured.'

'It may be added here, to finish with this detail (though it anticipates dates), that when the novel came out in volume-form the *Times* quoted in a commendatory review the very passage that had offended. As soon as I met him, I said, "You see what the *Times* says about that paragraph; and you cannot say that the *Times* is not respectable." He was smoking, and replied tardily: "No; I can't say that the *Times* is not respectable." I then urged that if he had omitted the sentences, as he had wished he had done, I should never have taken the trouble to restore them in the reprint, and the *Times* could not have quoted them with approbation. I suppose my manner was slightly triumphant; at any rate, he said, "I spoke as editor, not as man. You have no more consciousness of these things than a child."'

'To return to the April of that year. Speaking to him of a

remarkably generous review of the previous book of mine, I asked him if in such a case one ought not to write and thank the reviewer. He smoked on half a minute. "No, I don't see why you should thank him," he said. "I have criticised books in heaps for years and years, but nobody ever thanked me for a review." After a pause, gloomily: "Though perhaps the only feeling ever caused an author by a review of mine has been one of utter disgust!"'

'"Far from the Madding Crowd" having run its course, he asked me in December, if I could let him have another story. "I am sorry that the 'Madding Crowd' has come to an end," he wrote, "but all stories must end."'

From letters concerning 'The Hand of Ethelberta,' which was Mr. Hardy's next novel, a few sentences may be excerpted. [*May* 1875.]—'I read with much pleasure the chapters you sent me. I doubt (to mention the only trifle which occurred to me) whether a lady ought to call herself or her writings "amorous." Would not some such word as "sentimental" be strong enough? But I am hypercritical perhaps. . . .' [*August.*]—'I may be over particular, but I don't quite like the suggestion of the very close embrace in the London churchyard. Otherwise I have no criticisms to offer. . . .' [*October.*]—Remember the country parson's daughters. *I* have always to remember them! I think you have much improved the rose-leaf incident. . . . Excuse my criticisms: you have encouraged me. . . .' But Mr. Hardy must resume his tale.

'As a relief from the "Ethelberta," comedy, or satire, on the fusion of classes—which, by the way, was published thirty years too soon, and, following a pastoral tale, nonplussed the public—I had planned some tragic poems, being anxious to get back to verse if I could. But, he seemed disinclined, as editor, to take up the idea, and in 1877, on my starting another novel, "The Return of the Native," we had some correspondence about its suitability for the *Cornhill.* But, though he liked the opening, he feared that the relations between Eustacia, Wildeve, and Thomasin might develop into something "dangerous" for a family magazine, and he refused to have

anything to do with it unless he could see the whole. This I never sent him ; and the matter fell through. It was the last contribution that I ever offered him, so far as I can remember.'

'Our correspondence as editor and edited was thus broken off, but when I had published "The Trumpet Major," he expressed, with some perversity I thought, his regret that I had not given him the opportunity of bringing it out. He said he liked stories in which "Old George the Third was round the corner," as in that one, but not those in which he was on the stage. "Though," he added, in a saturnine tone, "the heroine married the wrong man." I replied that they mostly did. "Not in magazines," he answered.'

'After this I saw him but very occasionally, until at length a ten years' chasm of silence came between us in our pilgrimage—a silence which I shall always regret. Towards the latter part of the time, in 1897, I was in the Bernese Oberland, when the opening scenery revealed the formidable peak of the Great Schreckhorn, which, as I knew, he had been the first to "conquer" (to use his own word) as an Alpine climber in 1861, where he had been "frequently flattened out against the rock like a beast of ill-repute nailed to a barn." Then and there I suddenly had a vivid sense of him, as if his personality informed the mountain—gaunt and difficult, like himself. His frequent conversations on his experiences in the Alps recurred to me, experiences always related with modesty in respect of his own achievements, and with high commendation of the achievements of others, which were really no greater than his own. As I lay awake that night, the more I thought of the mountain, the more permeated with him it seemed : I could not help remarking to my wife that I felt as if the Schreckhorn were Stephen in person ; and I was moved to begin a sonnet to express the fancy, which I resolved to post to him when I got home. However, thinking that he might not care for it, I did not do so.'

Stephen did not see the sonnet ; but Mr. Hardy, to whom I cannot be too grateful, allows me to print it here :

THE SCHRECKHORN.

With Thoughts of L. S.

(June 1897).

Aloof, as if a thing of mood and whim,
Now that its spare and desolate figure gleams
Upon my nearing vision, less it seems
A looming Alp-height than a guise of him
Who scaled its horn with ventured life and limb,
Drawn on by vague imaginings, maybe,
Of semblance to his personality
In its quaint glooms, keen lights, and rugged trim.

—At his last change, when Life's dull coils unwind,
Will he, in old love, hitherward escape,
And the eternal essence of his mind
Enter this silent adamantine shape,
And his low voicing haunt its slipping snows
When dawn that calls the climber dyes them rose ?

XIV

WORDSWORTH'S ETHICS

(1875–1878)

On his forty-third birthday Stephen's wife died. For some years he had been concentrating his strong affections at a single point. Suddenly he had been dashed from happiness to misery, and, if few men could be happier, few could be more miserable. The little that need be added to what can be assumed, will not come as a surprise to readers of the foregoing chapters. Perhaps they will remember a phrase of Sir James Stephen's : 'a sensitive plant grafted on a Norwegian pine.' Whether botanists would sanction the father's metaphor we will not inquire, but it returns to the memory of some of those who knew the son. He was sensitive and could suffer acutely. This was not apparent to every one. There was plenty of the Norwegian pine—or of the Schreckhorn—to be seen. There were people who at this time thought him hard and cold and stern. Moreover, as his father would protect himself from intrusion by eloquent and continuous speech, Leslie could on occasion protect himself by some short phrase which sounded bitter and sarcastic to those who did not know that this was the shell within which he shrank from observation. To this must be added that to a singular degree he had become dependent on the love by which he had been surrounded. He had been working at his big book incessantly, and ominous headaches had been the result. Much that in former times he bore with ease began to jar his nerves and try his temper : in particular, 'business' or anything akin to 'business.' Thoroughly generous in money matters he was subject to financial panics, easily to be

dispelled by a smile and a few kind words, but worrying to the lonely man, and worse than worrying when they left behind some fear that he had been troublesome to others. He looked sad and prematurely old. One who was then a child remembers gazing with awe and dread at the gaunt man with bent head, dressed in black—like Wagner's Flying Dutchman—remembers also how the iceberg thawed, and how the terrible Mr. Stephen could charm a little girl with tales from Scott of Roundheads and Cavaliers. Then, greatly daring, she put a flower in his button-hole.

That in these sorrowful days Stephen was writing as he had never written before will probably be allowed by readers of his works, when they have been told that to this time they owe 'Wordsworth's Ethics,' 'The Alps in Winter,' and 'An Agnostic's Apology'—I mean the essay that bears that name, not the whole book. This trilogy we might call Stephen's *De profundis;* but rather let us see him *in excelsis*, on the narrow ridge, sure of foot and clear of head. Critics who praise his work at all seem generally to reserve their heartiest praise for the essay on Wordsworth. A discriminating critic has lately said that 'it glows with an intensity of enthusiasm for which, in the whole range of Stephen's works, a parallel could hardly be found.' 'The concluding pages,' he adds, 'of this profoundly moving essay are really a lay sermon upon the unselfish use of sorrow.'[1] 'But I am verging on the poetical'—with this characteristic remark Stephen breaks off the lovely 'Alps in Winter.' He was not the man to take his woes to market, but, when once the clue has been given (and some letters will give it) we may find in the work of this time a strong autobiographical element—more exactly trustworthy than what Stephen openly said of his life in some of his humorous moods. 'Other poetry becomes trifling when we are making our inevitable passages through the Valley of the Shadow of Death: Wordsworth's alone retains its power.' 'To me the Wengern Alp is a sacred place—the holy of holies in the mountain sanctuary, and the emotions produced when

[1] From an essay by Mr. Herbert Paul, now reprinted as an introduction to the new American edition of 'Free-thinking,' pp. 42, 43.

no desecrating influence is present and old memories rise up, softened by the sweet sadness of the scenery, belong to that innermost region of feeling which I would not, if I could, lay bare.'

But these are not the only essays in this group. There are the agnostic essays also. Not for one moment did Stephen allow his grief to interfere with his convictions, and in this bad hour, in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, he set himself to state those convictions in the plainest and most uncompromising terms. That, so it seemed to him, was the manner in which he could best help his fellow sufferers. He did not believe that much temporary relief, and was very sure that much permanent harm, comes of the use of anodynes. Some who would dislike these essays in any case will like them none the better for being told that they were written with a heavy heart. Others who like these essays—and that many such there are is statistically provable—will have guessed that the author was familiar with grief. 'Standing by an open grave, and moved by all the most solemn sentiments of our nature, we all, I think—I can only speak for myself with certainty—must feel that the Psalmist takes his sorrow like a man, and as we, with whatever difference of dialect, should wish to take our own sorrows; while the Apostle is desperately trying to shirk the inevitable, and at best resembles the weak comforters who try to cover up the terrible reality under a veil of well-meant fiction. I would rather face the inevitable with open eyes.'[1] Into what Stephen wrote at this time he put himself, both head and heart. So much is unquestionable. To me the head seems strong, and I know that the heart was tender.

Since I wrote the last paragraph, there has come to my hands Mr. Benn's 'History of English Rationalism in the Nineteenth Century.' Therein he has said something which I believe to be true, but which for lack of accurate knowledge I could not have said: namely, that the great success of the

[1] These words occur in the essay called 'Dreams and Realities,' as it now stands in the volume called 'An Agnostic's Apology.' They did not appear in that essay when it was originally published in the *Fortnightly Review*, September 1878.

name 'agnosticism' was due 'neither to Spencer, who did not adopt it till a later period, nor to Huxley, who did his best to render it unmeaning, but to Leslie Stephen.' Of Stephen's essay, his 'decisive stroke,' the learned historian writes thus: 'It vibrates all through with a passionate personal note; and that is what explains its immediate success in securing acceptance for the party-name. The author's masterly handling of the dialectical weapons told for much; literary skill and charm told for more; but character and sincerity told for most.'[1]

Then in these same days Stephen had to finish the big book upon which he had been engaged for some years, 'The History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century.' It had become distasteful to him, and he confesses that he could not bring himself to revise what he had written in a happier time. The characteristic doubt about the title was, as we shall see, not solved until the last moment: 'English Thought' seemed too large and pretentious. What had been conceived as an essay on the deists had grown and grown. Many will, I think, regret that it was not allowed to grow yet further, for of such history as Stephen was teaching himself to write we can hardly have too much. Twenty years later (1895) he pronounced a severe sentence on this 'so-called History of English Thought.' 'I wrote it,' he said, 'with a certain audacity which I do not now possess. I took some things very easily, as it seems to me, and subsequent work, requiring more thorough research, has led me to guess that it is very superficial.' I cannot believe that this is a just judgment. What I suppose to be true is that the Stephen of 1895 had discovered that the Stephen of 1875 had done scanty justice to some of the minor characters, and had handed on without sufficient examination a few traditional and conventional estimates of men and movements. What I believe he had chiefly to blame himself for, was that in his desire to be fair to the other side, he had too often repeated of the more unorthodox people what had been said of them by the more orthodox. He had to make an apology to Thomas

[1] 'History of Rationalism' (1906), ii. 383, 387.

Paine.[1] Moreover, it is true that at this time he did not know, as he afterwards did, how beset by pit-falls is the path of the historian when he finds himself among obscure and forgotten books. He had not a natural turn for what is called research. The pleasures of the chase came to him as somewhat of a surprise late in life. Also, it is to be remembered that when he began his book there was but little organised study in England of the matters of which he was to write; there was no 'Mind,' no 'Historical Review,' no 'Dictionary of National Biography.' He bought his deists as and when he could find them, and did his work at home, and not in the British Museum. Still we have good reason to rejoice that the Stephen of the seventies had 'a certain audacity.' People who have not a certain audacity get nothing done. Thirty years have passed and the book has hardly yet been superseded, and in these days of vigorous historical inquiry a life of thirty years is long. From out of what was said of this treatise when Stephen died I choose one sentence which seems especially true. 'The final section on "Characteristics" —a historically suggestive title—forms a supplement, to which it would not be very easy to find a parallel elsewhere, to the general history of our eighteenth-century literature, and will not easily be superseded till an equal to its writer is found, combining qualities rarely enough united in historians either of thought or of letters.'[2] Stephen was, I should say, already duly impressed by the interdependence of all kinds of thought —theological and metaphysical, political and poetical, scientific and fanciful—and as yet, being happily 'audacious,' he was not stricken dumb by the complexity of the facts that have to be investigated and described. Later on I have heard him maintain that philosophical thought and imaginative literature can have no history, since they are but a sort of by-product of social evolution, or, as he once put it, 'the noise that the wheels make as they go round.' That was one of the reasons which he gave for declining to promise Lord Acton a chapter

[1] *Fortnightly*, August 1893. And compare vol. ii. pp. 260, 261 in the first and third editions of the 'History.'

[2] Dr. A. W. Ward, in the *Manchester Guardian*, Feb 23, 1904.

on the Thought of the Nineteenth Century for the 'Cambridge Modern History.' The request, which was earnestly pressed, was characteristic of Lord Acton's liberal mind. The answer came from one who thought very poorly of his own 'so-called' History.[1]

However, there the book is to be judged by all. It at once changed Stephen's position in the literary world. The change was well described by Mark Pattison in his generous welcome of a work which he might excusably have regarded as a trespass upon his close. 'Known hitherto as a writer of short essays on social and literary subjects, Mr. Stephen has here turned to an undertaking, in point of extent requiring research and sustained labour, and in point of matter requiring no small amount of philosophical training. It is not too much to say that he has met both these requirements in a degree which will be a surprise to those who had only known him as wise rather than learned, shrewd and witty rather than industrious. The mere list of books read over by the author, many of them not easy reading, is formidable enough of itself. The mastery of the material evinced is proof of a capacity for continuous and comprehensive thinking.'[2] Success had come, but at the wrong moment. I fear that it only made Stephen sadder. Certainly he would not have been cheered by knowing that Pattison was abandoning a cherished project and setting aside as useless 'the collections of years.'[3]

The preface was dated 'September 1876.' By that time another book had been conceived: namely, that which became the 'Science of Ethics.' Within a few weeks after his wife's death Stephen made the following note: 'Jan. 11, 1876.

[1] A third edition was issued late in 1902. By that time Stephen was suffering from a mortal disease, and was unable to do more than make a few corrections. The severest critic of his book, so far as I am aware, has been Mr. J. M. Robertson. I know too little of the eighteenth century to estimate the justice of his criticisms. But that Stephen's sins as an historian are to be ascribed to 'an apprehensive propitiation of the orthodox reader' ('Dynamics of Religion,' p. 304) is not to my mind a happy guess.

[2] Mark Pattison: 'The Age of Reason,' *Fortnightly*, March 1877.

[3] *See* an article on 'Pattison's Memoirs,' by Mr. Morley, *Macmillan's*, April 1885, p. 460.

A book which has been dimly perceivable to me for some time past has taken more distinct shape in my mind during this last agony, and I have resolved to execute it in memoriam—if— Anyhow I will begin, and here is the first sketch, *Thoughts on Morals. . . .*' There follows a shadowy outline of the book that appeared in 1882. Already Stephen knew in a general way what were the questions that he wanted to answer, but he knew also that much hard thinking would have to be done before his answers could be given to the world. In his 'History' he had discussed at some length the ethical theories of the eighteenth century, and very lately he had reviewed Sidgwick's 'Methods of Ethics' in *Fraser*.[1] This had led to some correspondence. Stephen told Sidgwick that the editor of the magazine had mangled his review in order to reduce its length, and he sent to Sidgwick the upshot of the omitted passages. Then there was some little debate, Sidgwick showing himself readier for argument than was Stephen, who said that he had learnt from his studies of past controversies, 'that a discussion almost always becomes futile after the first rebound.' Stephen at this time was inclined to think that Sidgwick made difficulties where none were, and any boggling over free will and necessity was in his eyes a sign that a man was not really clear-headed. 'I thank you very sincerely for your letter,' he writes to Sidgwick. 'To prevent misconception, I don't thank you for it so far as it is an act of free will, *i.e.*, as I take it, an accidental act. I thank you because the *intention* (as I assume for the purposes of argument) the intention to please me, proves that you act from the good *motives* of benevolence towards your kind or to me in particular.' However, what we have here to notice is that Sidgwick's book set Stephen thinking of ethics more closely than he had thought before, and that, to a larger degree than is apparent on the surface of a book which is expository and not critical, 'The Science' is a reply to 'The Methods.' Of the friendship between the two men a word will be said hereafter: 'one of my best and oldest friends'

[1] *Fraser*, March 1875.

is entered against Sidgwick's name in what might be called a private necrology.

We are not yet at the end of what was done in two mournful years. A 'second series' of 'Hours in a Library' was published in 1876. As was usually the case with his literary criticism, this leaves hardly any mark on Stephen's correspondence. Then in 1877 Mr. Morley was projecting that series of short biographies, 'English Men of Letters,' which became a model for many a series in England and elsewhere, and Stephen rapidly wrote that Life of Samuel Johnson which became a model among models. At the same time he was dissecting Newman's theory of belief, and supplying the *Cornhill* with yet more 'Hours.' But enough has been said to serve as a file for the following letters.[1]

March 5, 1876.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . Do you sympathise with me when I say that the only writer whom I have been able to read with pleasure through this nightmare is Wordsworth? I used not to care for him specially; but now I love him. He is so thoroughly manly and tender and honest, as far as his lights go, that he seems to me to be the only consoler. I despise most of your religious people who cultivate their maudlin humours, and despise far more your sentimentalists of the atheist kind, but old W. W. is a genuine human being, whom I respect. I think I shall say something to this

[1] A list of the articles published in 1876 and 1877 may be of interest as it will include much of Stephen's best work. (C. = *Cornhill*; F. = *Fortnightly*; H. = republished in the 'Hours'; P. = republished in the 'Playground'; A. = republished in 'An Agnostic's Apology and other Essays'). 1876. Feb., C., 'The Youth of Swift'; March, C., 'Humour'; April, C., 'The Ethics of Vivisection'; May, C. H., 'Macaulay'; June, F. A., 'An Agnostic's Apology'; July, C., 'International Prejudices'; Aug., C. H., 'Wordsworth's Ethics'; Oct., F., 'William Godwin'; Nov., C., 'Thoughts on Criticism by a Critic'; 1877. Jan., C., 'Heroes and Valets'; Feb., C. H., 'Fielding's Novels'; March, C. P., 'The Alps in Winter'; April, C. H., 'Charles Kingsley'; June, C., 'Genius and Vanity'; Sept., F. A., 'The Scepticism of Believers'; Oct., C. H., 'Massinger'; Nov. and Dec., F. A., 'Newman's Theory of Belief'; Dec., C. H., 'Charlotte Brontë.'

effect, though people generally think me a fool about poetry. I have read too, or repeated, for I know him by heart, our old friend Omar Kayyám. He is grand in his way, and, if spiritualised a little, strikes the right note at times; but he wants to be a little spiritualised. Yet honestly, literature and religion are rather empty. The only thing is living affection, and of that I have had most touching experience. . . .

[A long paragraph about friends who have been like 'the cup of cold water which Dives wanted, and which Lazarus refused on true Christian principles.']

So, you see, I have learnt one or two things, and I shall struggle on, and if life lasts, and my anchorage is not cut away by some new blow, I shall become tolerably happy. I hope that you will too, as the years go by. You have your children and I envy your possession of them—not, of course, that I can imagine loving any one better than my poor little Laura, but I should like to have more Lauras.

I have gradually got back to work. All books are dull; but I can write when I can't read, and have written masses—most of it for the waste-paper basket; but useful in keeping my mind at work. I find a good bit of metaphysical puzzling the best distraction. It lasts, and it keeps me hard at work. I have written one article for Morley, which I should like you to read when it appears. I thought there would be a kind of indecency in publishing it just now, as it is of an atheological tendency; but I had thought it out before my crash, and I found occupation in writing it down afterwards. I shall call it 'Agnosticism,' or something of that kind. It was suggested by the attempt to make that phrase a popular term of abuse. It consists in simply pointing out that we are all agnostics, though some people choose to call their ignorance God or mystery. . . .

The worst of it is that, as you so truly say, the hideous mass of commonplace life thrusts itself in between me and my old happiness, and further—what is an unfortunate tendency of mine—that unhappiness tries my temper. I am more fretful and irritable by disposition than you

perhaps know, and sometimes I bully my best friends shamefully. The problem of making sorrow ennobling instead of deteriorating is a terribly hard one. . . .

April 30, 1876.

To J. R. Lowell.

It is always a great pleasure to get a letter from you, and just now a greater pleasure than ever. I have always felt perfect confidence in your friendship, and it is somehow consoling to think that there are one or two people feeling for me as you do. . . . Grief like mine has only this one advantage, that it makes old friends dearer. I don't feel as if I could ever be grateful enough to you for your affection to me, and to some whom, I hope, I love better than myself.

As for Providence, I don't call people foolish—as you accuse me of doing—for believing in it, till they make a Providence of their own; and a very disagreeable kind of being it often is. I am content to take things as they come, and fight it out as well as I can.

You ask about our new house. It is at 11, Hyde Park Gate, South. It is small, close to Kensington Gardens, and very quiet, with a little garden. These are its recommendations; also that we shall be next door to one of our best friends, a Mrs. Duckworth, a widow with three little children, who will play with Laura. Here is a map [on which appear 'Hall of Omniscience' and 'Monument of the Late Lamented': that is, the Albert Hall and the Albert Memorial]. . . . I have sent you a copy of my book ['Hours in a Library,' Ser. ii.] My favourite essay, perhaps, is on a Yankee whom you ought to respect; I mean old Jonathan Edwards. I have also nearly finished a more ponderous work which will, I suppose, appear after the summer. It will be called, I think, 'English Thought in the Eighteenth Century.' It has given me a deal of trouble and can't, I fear, be amusing; but I have done the best I can, and am now very indifferent to success. . . .

I read my *Nation* to acquire sound views of American

politics. . . . Here I look upon politics with indifference, mixed with contempt. Perhaps it is wrong, but our spokesmen, as they call themselves, seem to me to be, though honest in money matters, yet of the puniest breed we have had since the days of Pitt. The Empress business is too futile to be even amusing. So I stick to my books, and, when my shoulders are freed from the weight of David Hume and Butler and the rest, I shall begin again at something more interesting to me.

When the fit of writing comes upon you again, please encourage it. You will be doing a real service to a rather down-hearted mortal. . . .

May 10, 1876.

To Mr. John Morley.

I am going to trouble you for an opinion on a point which bothers me. What ought I to call that damned book of mine ? I have taken the first volume to the printer's . . . [Scope of book described.] This being so, 'English *Deism* in the Eighteenth Century' sounds too limited. I once thought of 'E. Theism, &c.,' but that strikes me as rather affected ; I have now called it provisionally 'English Thought, &c.,' and add by way of supplement, 'a literary history.' This, again, seems to me rather too ambitious, as my chapter on metaphysics is rather a summary than a full discussion, and the chapters on the applications (except the ethical, which I have done pretty fully) are also not meant to be exhaustive or complete. How does it strike you ? . . . I am really ashamed of having said so much about a bit of work which, now that it is well-nigh done, seems very small, and which puts me in mind too often of old Johnson's 'I am solitary' and cannot impart any pleasure from a possible success. However, what is done is done.

May 15, 1876.

To Mr. John Morley.

I think that you are right ; but it does not greatly matter either way. I would rather for personal reasons that you

used 'Godwin' before the other article [The Agnostic's Apology]. I told Paul that I hoped to write, and got a copy of his book [on Godwin] on the strength of it. I guess that he now curses me [for not having written]—but, of course, such considerations should not sway the editorial mind. I do not feel that there is now any serious reason of a different kind for delay. It was purely a question of decorum with me, not of feeling. I did not want people to say 'That is indecent'; but I did not myself feel at any time unwilling to speak my mind.[1] . . .

May 16, 1876.

To Mr. Thomas Hardy.

My dear Mr. Hardy,—I must acknowledge what I have often had occasion to acknowledge before, the kindness with which you accept my criticisms. I am glad to hear of your plans for the future in every sense.

My remark about modern lectures was, of course, 'wrote sarcastic,' as Artemus Ward says, and intended for a passing dig in the ribs to some modern critics, who think that they can lay down laws in art like the Pope in religion, *e.g.*, the whole Rossetti-Swinburne school. But if you mean seriously to ask me what critical books I recommend, I can only say that I recommend none. I think as a critic that the less authors read of criticism the better. You, *e.g.*, have a perfectly fresh and original vein, and I think that the less you bother yourself about critical canons the less chance there is of your becoming self-conscious and cramped. I should, therefore, advise the great writers—Shakespeare, Goethe, Scott, &c. &c., who give ideas and don't prescribe rules. Sainte Beuve and Mat. Arnold (in a smaller way) are the only modern critics who seem to me worth reading—perhaps, too, Lowell. We are generally a poor lot, horribly afraid of not being in the fashion, and disposed to give ourselves airs on very small grounds. If I were in the vein, I think I should exhort you above all to read George Sand, whose country stories seem to me perfect, and have a certain

[1] The 'Apology' appeared in June, and 'William Godwin' in October.

affinity to yours. The last I read was the 'Maîtres-Sonneurs,' which (if you don't know it) I commend to you as well nigh perfect. You could do something of the same kind, though I won't flatter you by saying that I think that you could equal her in her own line. I don't think any one could. But the harmony and grace, even if strictly inimitable, are good to aim at.

I must not go into an essay. You know all that I have to say, I suspect, and you take my criticisms only too kindly.

Yours very truly,
L. Stephen.

[P.S.] Some things won't bear talking about—I can only thank you for your sympathy.

If you wish to speak to me about anything, I shall be here for a few weeks, and am at home in the mornings; but, frankly, I am not a very sociable person just now, though I should be really happy to see you if you want to for any reason.

June 1, 1876.

To J. R. Lowell.

I have your kind letter[1] which caused me some exultation—not only for more obvious reasons, but inasmuch as I never expected to receive two letters from you in such close succession. I have, however, rather a mania for quick answers, and I therefore say without delay, that I have inquired into your commission about Crabbe, and that you shall have the missing fragment if it is to be got—which I doubt. Further, I have to bow to your corrections[2] without reserve. That misprint of 'dreams' for 'drums' is enough to make one curse the art of printing. It would be so, at least, if I were a less hardened offender; but I have such a gift for misprints as few people can boast. I never look at an article of mine after it has been published without finding a bushel. . . .

I have little more to say at present. Time goes by

[1] 'Letters of J. R. Lowell,' ii. 185. [2] A long list of *errata*.

with me like a dream. Everything seems dim and shadowy. But of this I won't speak. I struggle on; though my solitude is dreadfully trying at times. . . .

We move in a fortnight or three weeks. . . . My poor books, which have multiplied a good deal lately, will have a hard time of it, and I shall be driven mad; and after that I hope for a little peace in the sleepy lake country, the drowsiest and quietest of all cockney-ridden places. There I mean to vegetate, and take my bearings of things in general.

[P.S.] Do tell me when you write next what Wordsworth means by the 'melancholy muccawiss,' Excursion, end of Book III. Is there such a bird? Do you know him? And what is his other name?

Coniston, *Aug.* 8, 1876.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . Ruskin [has] departed towards Italy. We had, however, seen the immortal author several times. . . . He makes, to say the truth, a very odd impression upon me. He regarded me with evident curiosity as, on the one hand, a specimen of the Alpine climbers, whom he professes to despise, and, on the other, a friend of yours. This last quality convinced him that there was something good in me somewhere; but he thought, I suspect, that it required some acuteness to discover it. For my part, I could not be at ease with him—an art in which I am not very skilful. I was afraid of contradicting him, lest it should annoy him, and of agreeing, lest I should be lying, and indeed inclined to treat him as a dangerous compound which might explode in any direction without notice. To bring about any real approximation between people who move in such different spheres, and one of whom is so eccentric, while the other is so matter of fact, must be in any case a matter of time, and I fear that we are not likely to be brought together enough to get over the obvious obstacles. Nobody indeed can talk to him without seeing his genuine kindliness as well as genius, and yet it takes a more sympathetic person than I am not to be repelled by some of his crotchets. . . .

11, Hyde Park Gate South, *Oct.* 7, 1876.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . We are strangely quiet, first because nobody is in town, and secondly, because of the intrinsic calm of this little back-water of a street. It is almost like the country, and we have even a garden with room for a sycamore and a Virginian creeper. . . . I worked too hard this summer, because work was my only relief, and have had no real holiday since. I was persecuted everywhere by the proofs of my book. That task is over—thank goodness!—the book ['English Thought'] is printed, and will, I suppose, be out this month. A virtuous American publisher (if the words are not a contradiction in terms) has bought 250 copies, and I have ordered one to be sent to you and one to Lowell. You will feel it more congenial than he; but I fear now that I have made it rather tough reading for anybody. I have, that is, gone too much into detail, and compressed my materials awkwardly. But all this does not worry me now. I am simply too happy to have washed my hands of the whole concern, and it must take its chance. . . . I mean to take things easy till Christmas, when I mean to set to work upon a book which has long been simmering in my mind. It will be of an ethical kind—something like Sidgwick's in part, though coming to a very different conclusion, and indeed really different in design. But it is too vague to tell you more about it; and I must not bother you prematurely. . .

Oct. 29, 1876.

To M. Loppé.

Voici un dimanche tranquille. Dans cette maison je ne puis entendre même les cloches des églises. . . . Nous avons passé le mois de juillet aux lacs près de Victor Marshall, qui a été très aimable pour moi, et près de Ruskin, qui a été très aimable pour ma belle-sœur. . . . Je ne suis pas très fort, je n'ai presque pas eu d'exercice méme dans les montagnes, je ne puis pas écrire un article sans me fatiguer et si je pouvais quitter ma petite fille j'essaierais

maintenant de prendre une vacance de quelques semaines. C'est impossible parce que j'ai diverses raisons pour ne pas m'absenter à présent, mais je ferai aussi peu que possible pendant deux ou trois mois. Une idée m'est venue en tête dont je veux vous parler. Vous m'avez souvent dit combien l'Oberland est beau pendant l'hiver. J'ai une espèce de faim pour les montagnes et surtout pour les montagnes de l'Oberland. Je pense que je pourrais quitter Londres pour une quinzaine vers le mois de janvier. Serait ce possible pour vous de me rejoindre à Interlaken ou Meiringen vers ce temps là, pour dix à douze jours ? Je ne puis pas être sûr encore ; mais si vous pensez que vous pourriez venir, je vous écrirai avant Noël pour arranger une réunion. Nous nous moquerions ensemble des bêtises du monde, nous admirerions la nature. Je fumerais des pipes et vous feriez des tableaux. Nous ne pouvons pas être bien heureux après nos pertes, mais je suis quelques fois près d'être heureux quand je suis avec un bon ami.

Dec. 3, 1876.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I am going this afternoon to sit at the feet of the immortal George Eliot. Poor woman ! The critics have dealt rather hardly with ' Daniel Deronda,' and, though I agree with them, I am rather sorry for her, for she seems to me to be really a very noble sort of person, and as little spoilt as a prophetess can well be in these days. I always like to talk to her. Then—such is my gaiety !—I am going to have tea with the Huxleys. I see by the *Nation* that he has been startling your good people in America. Did you see him, and how did you and he get on ? I like his pugnacity—a quality which I always admire. The more hard-hitting goes on in the world, the better I am pleased—meaning always hard-hitting in the spiritual sense, for at present the *Pall Mall Gazette* and Dizzy have made me a peace-at-any-price man. Why the devil we should trouble our heads about those [unspeakable] Turks is a question to which I see no reasonable answer. But I am

digressing. I have not been so dissipated as I shall be to-day for an indefinite time. I think that I sometimes stick too fast to my study chair, and feel in some danger of drying up into a mummy prematurely. . . . I read my *Nation* with great regularity, and wish often we had such a paper here. What with the spiteful narrowness of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and the pompous cynicism of the *Saturday*, and the gushing nonsense of the *Spectator*, I really don't know where to look for a decent bit of common sense in all English periodicals. . . . I am going to take [my daughter] to Brighton. There I look forward to some talks with Morley, who is stronger than of late, and with my excellent friends, the George Smiths. One of the best pieces of luck that I have had is in finding an employer like G. S., who is also a warm friend and a thorough gentleman. I might have been in bondage to the Xs or 'Y and Z'! The Lord be praised for my escape! With which pious ejaculation I pull up. . . .

Jan. 15, 1877.

To J. R. Lowell.

A year and a half ago, when I was in the Alps enjoying some of the happiest days I ever had or shall have, I was one day taking a walk, when suddenly your 'Commemoration Ode' came into my mind—I don't know why—and I proceeded to spout it to the Grindelwald Glacier. It affected me so much at the time that I said to myself: This must be one of the really fine and enduring poems, and as soon as I get home I will write to Lowell and tell him how his merit has been suddenly revealed to me; I knew it in a way before, but never before felt it so keenly. Of course when I got home I felt shy of saying such a thing to any one, having a true English hatred of all effusiveness. But now things are altered with me, and I have received your letter[1] (why you who write such letters don't write more of them is a puzzle—perhaps because if you wrote more, they would not be so pleasant) and further your Three

[1] 'Letters of J. R. Lowell,' ii. 267.

Odes. You have a fault, if it be a fault, as a poet, which is illustrated by the above anecdote, viz., that it takes—*me* at least—some time to get at you. I like some poetry better the first time of reading than the second; but yours, I find, must have time to grow upon me. The reason is, I take it, that your poetry wants thinking as well as mere listening, and therefore belongs to the kind which I like better the older I grow, and indeed tend to like exclusively. The result is, however, that I can't fairly judge you off-hand, and can only say that I hope to like these in time as well as their predecessors. I can tell that they are good: I have not yet assimilated them enough to say how good. I will only confess that I have a little prejudice to get over in the matter of Washington—he was so infernally respectable—and therefore am not quite so receptive to his praises as to Lincoln's, for whom I have a more human affection. Anyhow I thank you for the volume, and shall keep it on my table, and turn it over when I want a screed of high thinking and good solid (I don't use the word offensively, though I see that it is awkward now I have written it, but I mean intellectually satisfying) poetry. . . .

Feb. 4, 1877.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I am well. I went for a visit to the winter Alps, partly for the sake of a holiday, which I can get nowhere else, partly because the Oberland is to me a sacred place. I longed to worship there again. The trip was most successful. Had I the pen of Ruskin, I could not describe to you a tithe of the tender, melancholy, inspiriting glories of the Alps in January. They surpass all I had fancied. I could grow rhapsodical. If I had ever made a rhyme I could write poetry about them. I am inclined to fall upon my knees whenever I think of them. I was pleased, moreover, to find myself far stronger than I expected. I had one day's walk of twelve hours, wading up and down steep slopes covered knee-deep with fresh snow. The labour was really severe; but I did my work like a man. . . . In

sober earnest, my sense of strength gave me fresh courage. I shall set to work, not with the old delight, but with something of the old confidence. I mean to begin a new book ['Science of Ethics'] to-morrow morning. It will not require so much reading; but it will require far more thinking than the old. . . .

What a queer place this is! My excellent brother, now Sir James Stephen, has been speechifying in defence of the ritualists for four or five days. He says that he could hardly keep his countenance. One main question is whether the sacramental bread is to be cut thick and square, or round and thin—like a die or a penny. And David Hume has been dead for a century! I blush for my race. If I laugh, people shriek 'levity' and 'cynicism.' But the utter silliness of the whole business protects it even from laughter. I could as soon ridicule a baby six months old.

March 1, 1877.

To Mr. Holmes.

. . . Your opinion of my book pleases me, as it ought. It is pleasant to know that one's friends are satisfied: indeed it is by far the pleasantest thing connected with writing. On one point you rather surprise me; you speak as if I were a pessimist, and even a pessimist in the Schopenhauer sense. The impression is not peculiar to you, and I infer that my criticism of the optimists or some general tendency in the book—not fully perceptible to me—has given it a character which I did not intend. Now I am no optimist, and think the whole Leibnitz theory absurd. But I am not—if I know it—a pessimist either. I entirely agree with what you say as to the futility of a philosophical pessimism. My view of the Universe—if you want to have it—is that it is kind of mixed, but that, on the whole, the good has decidedly the best of it. But I put the argument upon experience entirely, and have nothing to say to *a priori* demonstrations one way or the other, except that I don't believe in them. I think that the impression produced upon you is partly due to the fact that I had to do with

optimists chiefly, and therefore had to insist upon the other view most articulately, and partly, it may be, to the fact that I was not in the best of spirits when I was finishing up my work, and it may have been coloured by that fact. Yet—if you won't mind my speaking of myself (which is rather an absurd apology when I am writing a letter about myself) —I should say that few people had less cause or tendency to be pessimistic. Till I was forty-three I had as happy a life as anybody need wish—far happier than most of my acquaintance. . . . Therefore my melancholy, which may have got into my book, is not a symptom of chronic personal bitterness. Perhaps the next will be more cheerful; but it is more speculative and less historical, indeed, hardly historical at all. I sometimes am half disposed to envy people like you, absorbed in work that comes from without instead of having to spin everything out of their own minds. But there are compensations in everything. I hope that you will find time to enlighten the world upon legal principles.[1] . . .

March 16, 1877.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . Now I propose to answer one or two things in your letter. My book ['English Thought'] has done well enough, and has been well enough received by everybody. Pattison has made some remarks upon it in the last *Fortnightly*, which are perfectly satisfactory to me, as he was the critic whom I most dreaded. I have avoided reading reviews as much as possible, for they always vex me; but what I have read has been as favourable as I could wish. I have been elected by the Committee at the Athenæum, which is pleasant in itself, and a pleasant indication of respect. It is really curious that a book of such a tendency should procure admission to a respectable haunt of bishops and judges. The orthodox A. B. was one of my chief supporters; but I hear that I was elected with great unanimity.

[1] Mr. Justice Holmes had not yet published his famous book on 'The Common Law.'

I am not surprised at the impression made upon your friend by my book. The broad-churchmen, rationalisers, spiritualisers, allegorisers, or whatever they may be, are the people to whom I am really most obnoxious.

Did I tell you, by the way, about Archdeacon Allen? If so, skip my repetition. He—a respectable, kindly, hot-headed old parson—wrote to ask me a string of questions: Whether I held Christ to be an impostor, &c. &c. I replied frankly, though civilly, as he was really a friend of my father and mother, in which character he addressed me. He then sent my letter to J. H. Newman, begging the great man to come out and slay the Philistine. J. H. N. replied that he was too old for controversy, and, in fact, civilly shunted the question. Then Allen wrote to (of all people!) Thompson, the Master of Trinity, sending him both letters. Thompson in reply, said nothing whatever of me and my atrocities, but said that Newman's letter was so beautiful that he would willingly give for it all the money in his pocket, viz., £3 10*s*. Allen accepted the offer, and presented the cash to the Zanzibar Mission—which is so far the total result of his labours. . . .

I had an odd experience in controversy the other night. I went to the Metaphysical Club and read a paper of my brother's (who had to be on circuit) in answer to Gladstone's paper in the *Nineteenth Century*. Some clever—some very able—men were there: James Martineau, Mivart, Huxley, Lord Selborne, Prof. Robertson, Hutton, &c.; but when the paper was read they had an inarticulate wrangle over things in general, which could not have been more rambling if we had been a party of undergraduates. It soon came to be a game of random abuse, in which we each said the nastiest thing that occurred to us without the smallest reference to the context. I shall hardly go on attending meetings if this was a fair specimen. It was really humiliating.[1] . . .

[1] Gladstone's paper 'On the Influence of Authority in Matters of Opinion' appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* for March, and Sir J. F. Stephen's reply in the April number. For more of the Metaphysical Society, *see* 'Life of Sir J. F. Stephen,' 360.

You ask me about the book which I said I was beginning. [The general character of the 'Science of Ethics,' as then conceived, is sketched, 'my wish being to put what may be called the derivative or scientific theory of morality so as to meet various objections in their newest shape, and to show how morality is independent of theology.'] The plan is rather ambitious, but 'nothing venture, &c.' I may not be able to add much to the theory, but I do think that I can put it in a tolerably logical and effective way. My own estimate of my powers is that a logical exposition of a system of thought is just what I can do best, and I am a little tired of the purely critical attitude.

May 5, 1877.

To Mr. Norton.

Since I wrote to you last I have read Mr. Chauncey Wright's book, or nearly all, and—to say the truth—found it a tolerably tough morsel.[1] . . . Perhaps I am a little spoilt by article-writing and inclined to value smartness of style too highly. The only point which struck me unpleasantly in the substance of the book was his rather over-contemptuous tone about Spencer and Lewes. I don't doubt that his criticisms of Spencer are tolerably correct, though I can't see that Spencer really means to concede so much to the enemy as C. W. supposes; but I confess that Lewes seems to me to be a remarkably acute metaphysician, and one who will make his mark. . . . Anyhow, Wright must be a great loss. Nobody can mistake the soundness and toughness of his intellect, and his thorough honesty of purpose. I had the pleasure the other day of showing the book to the great Darwin, who had already received a copy from you. He was in town for a few days, and most kindly called upon me. You may believe that I was proud to welcome him, for of all eminent men that I have ever seen he is beyond comparison the most attractive to me. There is something almost pathetic in his simplicity and

[1] 'Philosophical Discussions,' by Chauncey Wright, New York, 1877. *See* 'Life and Letters of Charles Darwin,' iii. 144.

friendliness. I heard a story the other day about a young German admirer, whom Lubbock took to see him. He could not summon up courage to speak to the great man; but, when they came away, burst into tears. That is not my way; but I can sympathise to some extent with the enthusiastic Dutchman. . . .

May 24, 1877.

To H. Sidgwick.

I did not see your article upon Bentham till a day or two ago. I was pleased by your kind (only too kind) reference to me, partly on its own account and partly because it gives me a pretext for writing a line to you.[1] I will not defend myself for the omission which you point out in my book [its stopping short of Bentham]. . . . I had intended to add some account of him both as a moralist and as a political writer when I finally revised the book; but the condition of my mind when that came to be done was such as to make me snatch at any excuse for cutting things short. If I have the chance I will try to supply the defect, and in that case I need not say that I shall again study your article attentively. I don't always agree with you; but you always set me thinking, which is the most valuable of intellectual services. . . .

July 30, 1877.

To Mr. Norton.

I saw Lowell [on his way to Spain] yesterday, and hope to see him again to-night. . . . About a month ago I collapsed more decidedly than I generally do at this time of year. . . . I therefore went to the Lakes with my sister and Laura, and abandoned myself to complete idleness. It has done me good, as idleness always does; but I am not up to any work yet. . . . I have come up here for the marriage [of Miss Thackeray and Mr. Richmond Ritchie], which takes place on Thursday next. . . . I shall spend

[1] 'Bentham and Benthamism,' *Fortnightly*, May 1877; reprinted in 'Miscellaneous Essays and Addresses.'

the rest of the summer loafing about, first at the Lakes and afterwards nearer London . . . and then I hope to come home and settle down to work as vigorously as I can. . . .

I saw the great Sir James yesterday. His career seems to be coming to a successful result. . . . He is, as I have reason to know better than before, one of the staunchest and best of brothers, though differences of age and circumstance have kept us rather apart. . . . At Coniston I saw Ruskin the other day, and had a quiet talk with him. (Ruskin is at the exact antipodes of Fitzjames, but Hume reckons contrast as one source of association.) He spoke very affectionately of you and yours, which is indeed the point upon which we most nearly agree. . . . I have, as you know, a certain awkwardness in talking to him, and we nearly got into a dispute, though by mutual consent we diverged into safer topics. He told me that he had nine volumes in the press at once, including that wonderful 'Fors.' It is a pity, though I did not say so, that he lets off all his powder in fireworks instead of using it for legitimate purposes, and loading a single gun with it. But so it is, and to argue with him would, I guess, be as useless as to preach a popular sermon just now to the Turks.

Waterhead Hotel, Coniston, *Aug.* 7, 1877.

To Mr. John Morley.

So be it! Put me down for 'Johnson,' if you please. I may not impossibly feel inclined to go in for him pretty soon, as I am getting stronger daily. Hills, even little ones, seem to have a magical effect upon me. . . . I have a kind of sneaking feeling that 'Swift' would have made a better life, and he has had no Boswell. But I suppose that you have some one else in your eye, and, after all, it does not much matter. . . .

11, Hyde Park Gate South, *Feb.* 4, 1878.

My dear Morley,—I send off 'Johnson' to-day. . . .

Oct. 22, 1877.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . Having just finished an article about Newman for the *Fortnightly*, I am in momentary idleness. . . . (*Resumed Nov.* 15.)—My 'Newman' has appeared partly: *i.e.*, half in the November number of the *Fortnightly*, the other to follow in December.[1] I should like you to look at it if it comes in your way, for he is a curious cuss, and has interested me a good deal. I was at the Metaphysical Society two days ago and listened to a most rambling controversy between Hutton of the *Spectator*, Huxley, Dr. [W. G.] Ward, and others. Oh! what rot people talk, and will talk, I suppose, to the end of the chapter! If anybody finds my books on a stall a century hence, I suppose that they will make the same remark about me. Well, one must do one's best all the same. . . .

Nov. 21, 1877.

To Mr. Holmes.

I was very glad of your letter. I will not apologise for my long silence; but I can partly explain it. My life has been so radically changed by the heavy blow which struck me two years ago, that I have turned into a kind of recluse. I have not forgotten my friends; nay, I want them more, and think of them oftener than before; but I have a feeling as if I ought not to inflict any share of my troubles upon them. Or rather, I think—for nothing is so puzzling as one's own feelings—I am frequently so depressed that any kind of social intercourse, even through letters, was uncongenial. I felt as though I had been struck off the lists, and for the future was to lead a ghostlike existence, speaking only when I was spoken to. Well, without trying to analyse my state of mind, I grant that it was morbid, and I will try to shake it off. Certainly when a kind hand is held out to me, I can grasp it as warmly as ever, and with a still stronger sense of gratitude. I am heartily glad, my dear

[1] Reprinted in 'An Agnostic's Apology.'

Holmes, that you remember me so kindly, and wish to hear from me. . . .

I have revived gradually, and life is becoming tolerable. It is not bright, and can never have the old brightness; but I am getting used to the twilight, and, compared with most people, I have had a very happy life, and even find my present life worth living. Another catastrophe has happened to me, which certainly is not a pure misfortune; but which I cannot yet learn to regard as a pure blessing. My sister-in-law, Miss Thackeray, continued to live with me, and she is one of the most lovable of all women. I never knew any one who was like her—I may almost say in kind, not to speak of degrees. She has, that is, a genius for sympathy, and has a greater capacity for loving many people, and yet loving sincerely and warmly than I have ever known. [She is now married and very happy. It would be the height of unreason and selfishness in me to complain, but it is a separation from the past. Then my own sister came to live with me; but she fell ill, and has been forced to return to her own house.] So here I am left all alone with my little girl, who is thriving, and is the one bright spot in my life. I work as well as I can; but I cannot work as quickly as I used. . . .

I will try to write again at Christmas, and will take up my interrupted series [of letters]. I half wonder at my courage in promising to do anything at six-monthly intervals. Six months seems a long time to count upon—but we will see. . . .

Dec. 23, 1877.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I am bothered about housekeepers and governesses. . . . I am a deplorably helpless being in matters of this kind; but somehow I suppose that I shall, in Lowell's phrase (or one he taught me), 'worry through.' If it were not for Laura it would matter little. Somehow I am always up to the eyes in work now, and yet I don't seem to get on very fast. My chief employment at this time is doing

a little book on Sam. Johnson, for a series of which Morley is editor. By the way, he told me that he had written to you about it. I am half ashamed of the business in one way, for it seems wicked to pick the plums out of poor old Bozzy, and yet that is all that is to be done; and the plums are very fine ones. I don't fancy I am much like S. J., in any way, and guess that he would hardly have attracted me very much in his life-time; but I don't know any one whom I enjoy so much in 'the subjective stage of existence,' as the positivists say. His unreason is so incomparably better to my taste than Macaulay's good sense: *e.g.*, I quite agree with him that a young woman who thinks for herself about religious matters is an odious wench, though I should not dare to say it in public, and, in fact, preach quite the contrary—in a sense. . . .

Interrupting for a moment the series of letters, I must explain that by the end of 1877 Stephen was more lonely than ever. Long afterwards he noted that for the first and last time in his life he ate his Christmas dinner in solitude. His sister-in-law was married in the summer. Then Miss Stephen came to live with him, but she fell ill, and was compelled to depart. Finally, I must add that the education of the motherless child was becoming a cause of grave anxiety. Stephen was to choose a German governess, who was to live in his house, and of German governesses he said that 'he did not know their points.' He was very helpless that Christmas at Brighton.

From another series of letters a few stray sentences may be detached: not those which tell most of what the writer was feeling, but some that speak of pursuits and opinions.

I have the *Fortnightly* with Pattison's article. He says very little good, but the little is pleasant and generous. . . . It makes me laugh sometimes—not a very cheerful laugh!—to think how proud I should have been a few years ago to write a successful book, and how utterly indifferent I feel to success of that kind. . . . There is a

silence which may be felt to-night. I shall have a turn at my German 'Life of Milton.'[1] I have another German book, which overpowers me, by one Lange.[2] He is dead, poor man! but he wrote just such a book as I would have written if I could. I could not, because it is so learned, and yet it is as clear as if it were in English. It makes me feel jealous. I think that my style is neater, but that is a small revenge. . . . I have been reading—nothing very severe—W. S. Landor and Massinger. I am cramming with a view to more 'Hours in a Library.' If I go on for a few years more I shall have written something like a big book—big, but not very first rate, for, after all, I am no Sainte Beuve; but the work amuses me, and gives me some ideas. . . . I have just had a letter from Harwood of the *Saturday*, who wants to know when he may begin sending me books again regularly for review. I shall tell him Never, but civilly, for he is a kindly man, and has been very friendly to me. But that work is more than I am up to. . . . X. writes far better than I do in many ways. He can keep up a continuous flow of eloquence—and real eloquence very often—whereas I am very short-winded and provokingly argumentative. My fault is to be always logic-chopping, and I can never keep at a high level of rhetoric for two sentences together. He can say things much more delicately than I can, as I must always have some definite tangible remark to make. In short, he is a better literary artist than I am, though he may not be so keen in speculative reasoning. But it is not worth criticising the works of second-rate authors. . . . I was slightly annoyed, by the way, last night, by a thing that often happens to me in its way. I thought I had written an appreciative article about Kingsley,[3] and A. B. said to me that he had been looking at it, and was glad to see that I had spoken of him so much more moderately than all the other reviews. That is the kind of praise I generally

[1] Probably 'Milton und seine Zeit,' by Alfred Stern, 1877–1879.
[2] 'Geschichte des Materialismus,' 1866.
[3] *Cornhill*, April 1877.

get, and which, I suppose, I generally deserve—not that I have defaced some idol in a satisfactory manner. But I should like to succeed in praising somebody some day. . . .

It seems to me at times as if there was no end to reading. Every new book suggests about a dozen more, and I already have plans which I could not carry out in thirty years. Well, it matters very little, because, as the immortal Goethe remarked somewhere, one must learn to renounce. . . . So many literary plans come into my head that I must arrange them more or less. I want to write my book about morals, which involves a whole quantity of metaphysics, ancient and modern. I want to write a series of 'Hours in a Library,' which will take me years. I want to write enough articles of another kind to make a little book of essays. I want to write a number of other books which suggest themselves to me at intervals, and I feel as if twelve hours a day for the next twenty years would be a moderate allowance. My only chance is to make some very strict rules—which will be a bother—as to times of reading, &c. I am wondering whether I could manage an hour or two before breakfast. That would really put me straight. I make these virtuous resolutions to fill up the time. They amuse me, and they don't do much harm. . . . I have been reading George Sand a good deal. She was one of those precocious infants, whom I rather hate for obvious reasons, but I hope that she lies more or less as to what she remembers, and as to what she could do. Anyhow, her childish stories, though they may be rather long and rather incredible, are by far the best account of childish days I ever read—as much better than Miss Martineau as, say, Swinburne is superior to C[oventry] P[atmore]. Indeed, that comparison is not strong enough; Swinburne is worth a dozen of your popish friend. . . . I shall take up my George Sand again. She is in a rather stupid bit of her story, and has just disgusted me by saying that all the armies of Europe could not have put down the French if they had not had a royalist party amongst them. I hate all patriotic sentiments. They mean vulgar brag;

and here is a woman, who is supposed to be a model of taste, reduced by her idiotic patriotisms into talking stuff fit for X. Y.'s [an officer's] mess—*i.e.*, a French X. Y. Nobody at any rate can accuse me of yielding to that weakness. . . . I have been going on with G. Sand's autobiography, and it grows more interesting. It is about the best autobiography I have ever read, and I am beginning to think that instead of boring, she really soothes me. . . . Did you read in the article about Mill [in Mr. Morley's book], the letter that he wrote to Harrison describing a visit of Mill's to his house on the Hog's Back ?[1] If I had done it, I should certainly have chaffed the great philosopher a bit ; but I am more irreverent than Morley. . . . J. H. N[ewman] is good enough as a writer and ingenious enough as a sophist to be worth a little examination. I only consider him as a curiosity. . . . Talk about my being kind to him [*i.e.*, Ruskin] ! Don't you know that he is one of the people who frightens me to death, and makes me want to sink into my shoes, and forces me to be sulkily silent—and then probably goes away and complains that *I* frighten *him*—which is absurd. . . . Victor Marshall is one of the few people who have been eccentric enough to take a liking to me in late years, since I have grown too old to make friends as easily as I once could. I have thought lately very often that I must be bestirring myself to polish up a few of my older friendships, which had become somewhat rusty ; for, though friendship is a very poor substitute for all that I have lost, it seemed necessary in my solitude to grasp at any hand that might be held out to me. . . . Troy [my dog] has been the cause of much unsociability of mine ; for I could never stay happily at the Club or go to see any picture exhibition or anything when he was waiting at the door. After all I am not a clubbable person. I should like to have a few friends, and to see them often, but I don't in the least care for a mixed lot. . . When I was at Cambridge I was held to be (though you won't believe it) rather a sociable person than otherwise I dined out

[1] ' The Death of Mr. Mill,' included in ' Critical Miscellanies,' 1877.

a good deal and talked and smoked and drank to general satisfaction. Now I have learned to loathe the kind of thing that I then enjoyed. I would rather have my book, and my pipe by myself than the most attractive party of dons or London people. . . . I am a sort of harmless misanthrope. . . .

These are detached phrases out of a prelude—the prelude to a surpassingly happy marriage. I have allowed Stephen to talk of his unsociableness, and to call himself a misanthrope. I will allow him to exclaim 'Lord! what a cranky brute I am!' That in these months he shrank from contact with his fellows is plain, and that sometimes he exploded in hasty speech. But if sorrow had made him bitter or sour or hard of heart, what actually happened could not have come to pass. A sermon, I suppose, should always be preached at some one. Stephen's 'lay sermon on the unselfish use of sorrow' was preached at the preacher's self. We will not say that there was no need for it; but that it was taken to heart will appear upon our record.

XV

THE SECOND MARRIAGE

(1878)

That lonely Christmas at Brighton was the end of Stephen's misery. A few days afterwards he had good news to send to his friends.

Jan. 8, 1878.

To Mr. Holmes.

Here is the letter which I promised, and which takes a very different turn from that which I expected. I wrote in answer to your last kind letter, and gave you a sad enough account of myself—at least I think so : and, by the way, it struck me after I had sent it, that I had written to you before in the same sense. If I repeated myself, forgive me.

Now I have a story to tell you. There is a lady who—I may say, for everybody agrees so long as I have known her—is good and beautiful. She married a friend of mine a few months before my own marriage, and she had been for years the dearest friend, or almost the dearest friend, of my wife and her sister. Her third child was born just before my little girl, and two months after the sudden death of his father, Herbert Duckworth. Poor Mrs. Duckworth was terribly struck down. She has since led a life of complete retirement, attending to her children, and nursing all her sick relations. She was the first person to whom every one came in trouble or illness. When our great trouble came she was the kindest of consolers. I cannot say how much she did for my sister-in-law [Mrs. Ritchie], who required not only friendship but actual nursing. Mrs. Duckworth is our next door neighbour almost, and I

have been constantly seeing her during the last two years. Her children have been the playmates of my poor little girl, who needed playmates very much, and to whom their friendship and their mother's care have been invaluable. . . . We are to be married before very long—the time is not yet fixed—and if I am not happy again, it will be my own fault. . . . Wish me well, my dear Holmes, and be content with this letter for the present.

Jan. 9, 1878.

To J. R. Lowell *at Madrid.*

I write to give you a piece of news which will, I think, hardly surprise you, and which, I am still more confident, will give you pleasure. It is that I am engaged to be married to Mrs. Herbert Duckworth, whom you saw in the summer. If you want to have any other opinion about her, I can refer you to A. B., who will, I suppose, be with you when you get this letter. He said in one of his last letters to me that he and I (by reason, I think, of our bad tempers) had a great attraction for 'lovely women'—'lovely' I take to be American. I thought it rather a daring speech, and was not surprised that Mrs. A. B. inserted a contradictory note. But I am beginning to think that there is something in it.

I cannot, however, speak lightly upon this subject without adding something more serious. Mrs. Duckworth has passed through seven years of widowhood in retirement from the world and entire devotion to her children and her sick or troubled relations. I have always pitied her and revered her. She has been so noble, so patient and unselfish. No one can be surprised that after her unfailing goodness to me and mine I should have fallen in love with her. . . . Of all my friends I know no one who will be more sincerely pleased than you by my good fortune. Send me one line to say so, all the same—as short as you please. How pleasant it will be if you can come and see us some day! We are not going to leave this street, though I know not whether my permanent address will be 11 or 13—13 I think. . . .

Jan. 8, 1878.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . And now I have something to tell you which will, I hope, please you. Your knowledge of human nature enables you to guess what must follow such a preface. Yes, I am going to be married to Mrs. Herbert Duckworth. I don't know whether you know anything about her. You may probably have seen her face in Mrs. Cameron's photographs.[1] Her history has been simple and sad[2]. . . . When we were in trouble she was the greatest of comforts to us; she is my neighbour here, and I have seen her constantly, and been soothed by her unwearying kindness, and so—and so. It has come about very naturally, and if I can make her life a little happier, I shall be happy once more myself. I will not moralise; but, my dear Norton, if you could see her and talk to her, you would congratulate me even more heartily than you will do now. We shall have a very quiet life, for we both love quiet; but I have now a fresh feeling of rest and hope. . . .

Behind that 'and so—and so' we will not penetrate. Nor shall I endeavour to tell what Mrs. Stephen was like. I will merely repeat, but from my heart, some words of Mr. George Meredith's which Stephen treasured: 'I never reverenced a woman more.' All that Stephen had tried to say about the ennobling use of sorrow in a 'profoundly moving essay' was incarnate. But that was not all. Her friends Watts and Burne-Jones did their best; Mrs. Cameron her best; Leslie himself said a little in the 'Forgotten Benefactors';[3] eyes that saw and ears that heard can never be satisfied.

It falls to me much rather to say, and on this I must dwell for a moment, that Stephen not only won a wife, but, if I may so speak, won a new family. Experience may have taught some people that there is a grain of truth in the jest that he

[1] Mrs. Cameron was Mrs. Duckworth's aunt.

[2] A repetition of what is said in the preceding letters.

[3] 'Social Rights and Duties,' ii. 252, 253.

[illegible]

[illegible] Norton

[illegible] I have something to tell you which will, [illegible] you. Your knowledge of human [illegible] what must follow such [illegible] to be married to Mrs. Herbert [illegible]

[illegible] we were in trouble she was the greatest of comforts [illegible] she is my neighbour here, and I have seen her constantly, and been soothed by her unwearying kindness, and so—and so. It has come about ve[illegible], and if I can make her life a little happier, I shall be happy once more myself. I will not [illegible] [illegible] me even more heartily than you will do now. [illegible] shall have a very quiet life, for we both love quiet; [illegible] have now a fresh feeling of rest and hope. . . .

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[1] Mrs. Cameron was Mrs. Duckworth's aunt.
[2] A repetition of what is said in the preceding letters.
[3] 'Social Rights and Duties,' ii. 252, 25[illegible]

Mrs Herbert Duckworth

from a photograph by Julia Margaret Cameron

repeated to Lowell about ill-tempered men and 'lovely women.' How that may be I do not know; but as a test of a thoroughly good nature we might suggest the degree to which, especially in the case of second marriages, those relationships which are said to exist 'in law' have more than a legal existence. Stephen stands that test. I am not speaking of the little group that grew up in his own house. There were no 'step' or 'half' relationships within those walls. Very slowly was it borne in upon me that not all the eight children whom I saw there had the same surname, and that, consequently, the family must in some way or another be composite. But that is not my present point, though it is important. His marriage gave Stephen many relations 'in law,' and I believe that I might say in general terms that he made himself beloved by them. Certainly, I might speak of warm affection felt for their 'Uncle Leslie' in a widening circle of nephews and nieces 'in law,' and the wives and husbands of nephews and nieces 'in law.' But, and this is even more important, he once more won a devoted sister and a devoted mother.

On this I dwell for a moment, for I have not sought to disguise the fact that at this time Stephen seemed alarming to some of those who met him: not only sad and gloomy, but morose and misanthropic. He knew it himself. 'It is common enough for a shy, "skinless" man—and that I certainly am—to make such an impression, especially if it is supposed that he could say something sharp if he pleased.' It must be remembered also that even broad-minded and tolerant men and women might be repelled by some of Stephen's public utterances. *Der fliegende Holländer* was accompanied by 'the damnatory motive': good Wagnerians will not misunderstand me. But I have said enough to enable me to introduce the two characteristic letters that follow, premising only that Stephen was writing to the mother of his future wife, that Mrs. Jackson was a great friend of Mr. Coventry Patmore, that she preserved these letters among her treasures, and that after her death the writer of them said, 'To me she was always as tender as to a real son.' Whether

I am about to injure Stephen's reputation as a literary critic I really do not know; but I think that I shall illustrate the absolute sincerity which helped to win the best that can be won.

[1877.]

My dear Mrs. Jackson,—I am really sorry to have offended you, though I hope for forgiveness. I see now that I spoke rather roughly and expressed myself too much in the sarcastic method, which wounds sympathetic admirers. I hoped that it would amuse you to see my ferocity; but you have taken some phrases too literally. I burlesqued C. P. a bit to bring out his meaning, and show what I disliked about it. But you are one of those eccentric people who don't enjoy hearing your friends abused; so you felt my reproaches, and I am sincerely sorry.

Meanwhile the substance of my criticism was as serious as possible. I do think C. P. effeminate Every man ought to be feminine, *i.e.*, to have quick and delicate feelings; but no man ought to be effeminate, *i.e.*, to let his feelings get the better of his intellect and produce a cowardly view of life and the world. I dislike George Herbert because he seems to me always to be skulking behind the Thirty-Nine Articles instead of looking facts in the face, and C. P. has found a refuge which I dislike still more heartily.

Thus the sentiment of the poem about his boy[1] seems to me still effeminate as well as commonplace. It is one of those pretty, proper little reflections that one meets in tracts and hears in sermons, and which one knows to be hollow. It won't do out of church. A poet ought to live in the open air, not inside a chapel with incense and painted windows. As soon as Wordsworth took to that way of thinking his power left him, or at least declined. Poor Coleridge muddled his intellect in the same way.

I may, of course, be as wrong as Jeffrey, though Jeffrey too said a true thing or two even about Wordsworth. Want of clearness *is* a fault in poetry as in everything else,

[1] 'The Toys' in 'The Unknown Eros,' published in the spring of 1877.

and so is a tendency to conceits. I don't fancy that C. P. is unintelligible because of excessive depth, but because he can't work out his ideas vigorously enough. But that is a question which will be decided by time. If he really has anything to say, somebody, I suppose, will find it out. Coleridge's taste for George Herbert is part of a craze which possessed all his set at that time, and made them insult the [eighteenth][1] century people beyond all reason. If you loathe Swift and Byron, I admit that there are repulsive things in them. If I despise C. P., won't you admit that there is something contemptible in him? I can't admit that I am spoilt by a habit of criticism. I think my practice in that art has taught me that I am very fallible, specially about poetry, and has taught me also to try to understand people; but it has not taught me that all admiration is wise. *I* should add that it has made me cultivate a habit of putting things as pointedly as I can; you would say 'smartly.' It is the same difference as feminine and effeminate. But in any case I deny the charge of levity, and am always sincerely anxious not to offend you more than I can help. My tongue runs away with me at times, or rather my pen, for my tongue is generally quiet enough.

March 25, 1877.

My dear Mrs. Jackson,—I thank you sincerely for your kind and forgiving letter. I have, it seems, had a bad but acute fit of temporary insanity. I ran amuck at your favourite poets, and hit out recklessly. Even if Tupper had been your pet idol, I ought to have thought twice about smashing him at the cost of losing any part of your esteem. But I have what poor Kingsley would have called 'Berserker fits' in a literary form, and some things irritate me like the proverbial red flag. You waved yours in my eyes and invited me to kneel respectfully. I shut my eyes and make a vicious charge. However, I hope that you have pardoned me, and I will try to be more reasonable next time.

The worst of it is that you have now seen the cloven

[1] 'seventeenth' MS

heel which I tried to conceal behind Wordsworth, and you won't quite forget its existence. But you need not fear that I exercise a dangerous 'influence' over anybody. I have neither the bad nor good qualities which induce people to make proselytes. I say what I think, and let my thoughts take their chance. I don't find that they make many converts. Anyhow, I am much more influenced than influencing. I am not likely indeed to alter my opinions for anybody; but certain people have a great power over my affections.

They won't make a Christian of me, but they will and do reconcile me to a world which has lost its old charm. Life is made tolerable, and more than tolerable, to me by the kindness of a few people, and it would be about as wise for me to quarrel with them as it would have been for Elijah to quarrel with his ravens. In that way they influence me more than they know, and I am deeply grateful, even when I seem to be throwing stones at my friendly visitors like Timon of Athens. . . .

Your affectionate
L. STEPHEN.

From among notes not of interest to the public, I may gather some sentences which, to a few of the readers of this book, may recall pleasant days while they throw a little light on Stephen. He had occasionally seen his future wife at the house of Mr. Prinsep, her uncle by marriage—'At this time Henry Thoby Prinsep was living in Little Holland House, a quaint, old-fashioned building, like a rambling farm house, with queer additions and alterations by successive occupants, which had a country air, although suburban London was beginning to threaten it. There was a good-sized garden with a croquet ground and quaint trees. The house was pulled down when the lease expired about 1874, and several of the houses in what is now Melbury Road occupy its place. 'Uncle Thoby' was a very noble old man—a grand specimen of the Indian official of the days of the Company. He became blind or nearly blind towards the end of his life. . . . The

Prinseps took Burne-Jones into their house when he was very ill, and were equally good to G. F. Watts, who was at this time domiciled in Little Holland House. His studios were a quaint set of rooms on the upper floor. George Meredith was another friend who often speaks enthusiastically of Uncle Thoby. The house had a character of its own. People used to go there on Sunday afternoons ; they had strawberries and cream, and played croquet, and strolled about the old-fashioned garden, or were allowed to go to Watts' studio and admire his pictures. I went there pretty often, and used, I must confess, to feel very shy. It was silly enough, but I have always been shy with artistic people, who inhabit a world very unfamiliar to me. And there used to be Leighton, now Sir Frederick, in all his glory, and Val Prinsep and his friends, who looked terribly smart to me. I was, I say, silly, for the parties were really far less alarming than those at the Leweses, where one had to be ready to discuss metaphysics or the principles of æsthetic philosophy, and to be presented to George Eliot, and offer an acceptable worship. No doubt, the good people at Little Holland House were about as much afraid of me as I was of them. Thackeray, as was natural, had been intimate at the house, and after his death Mrs. Prinsep was very affectionate to his daughters.'—Nursing her uncle Mr. Prinsep, in his last illness, was Mrs. Duckworth's employment between the day when she was engaged to Stephen and the day when she married him : in other words, between January 5 and March 26, 1878.[1]

At this point I shall take upon myself to reprint some

[1] Stephen collected a good deal of information about his wife's family. Enough to explain allusions can be given briefly. Dr. John Jackson (d. 1887) was educated at Cambridge, went to India, prospered as a physician at Calcutta, and married Maria Pattle, one of six sisters, of whom another married Charles Hay Cameron, another Henry Thoby Prinsep, and another Lord Somers. (*See Dict. Nat. Biog.* for an article on Julia Margaret Cameron, written by Mrs. Leslie Stephen, and an article on H. T. Prinsep by Sir A. J. Arbuthnot.) Dr. and Mrs. Jackson had three daughters : Adeline, who married Henry Halford Vaughan ; Mary, who married Herbert Fisher ; and Julia Prinsep. Mrs. Jackson came to England in 1848, and in 1855 Dr. Jackson joined her there. In 1867, Julia Prinsep Jackson married Herbert Duckworth, who died very suddenly in 1870. There were three children of the marriage, George Herbert, Stella, and Gerald de l'Étang.

verses of Lowell's, and if, I may so say, to restore them to their context. When Lowell came to reside in England as 'his Excellency,' the friendship between him and Leslie Stephen became, if that were possible, closer than before, and a new friendship, which also was very close, arose between Lowell and Mrs. Stephen. It was thus that Leslie wrote in 1895: 'At the end of two volumes of Lowell's letters, published by my dear friend, C. E. Norton, you will find a letter from me. I have said nothing in it that I did not deeply feel. But I might have added one thing, namely, that one great bond between us in later years was his hearty appreciation of Julia. It is a pleasant thought to me that I was the means of bringing to each of them a friendship, which each, I know, reckoned among the real treasures of their lives. . . . I will only add that the memorial erected to Lowell in the Westminster Chapter House (1893) was entirely due to her. She made me write a letter to the *Times*, proposing it—rather in spite of my own opinion . . . I like to recall the warmth with which she always spoke of him.' Lowell, I must add, stood in a quasi-sponsorial relation to one of the children of the marriage. When wife and friend were both gone, Stephen sent a copy of the following verses to Mr. Norton, and they were printed among Lowell's 'Last Poems,' one line accidentally dropping out, and one proper name being changed. They will gain, I think, by being reprinted in this place, and there is no reason now why an 'original reading' should not be restored. The only comment that seems necessary is that Watts painted a portrait of Stephen; but perhaps a scholiast would add that at one point the poet seems to suggest, by the figure of speech called aposiopesis, that the painter 'ne'er drew' something that might be seen in Stephen's face.

VERSES INTENDED TO GO WITH A POSSET DISH TO MY DEAR LITTLE GOD-DAUGHTER, 1882.[1]

In good old times, which means, you know,
The time men wasted long ago—
And we must blame our brains or mood
If that we squander seems less good—

[1] 'Last Poems of James Russell Lowell,' p. 38.

THE SECOND MARRIAGE

In those blest days when wish was act
And fancy dreamed itself to fact,
Godfathers used to fill with guineas
The cups they gave their pickaninnies,
Performing functions at the chrism
Not mentioned in the Catechism.
No millioner, poor I fill up
With wishes my more modest cup,
Though had I Amalthea's horn
It should be hers the newly born.
Nay shudder not! I should bestow it
So brimming full she couldn't blow it.
Wishes aren't horses: true, but still
There are worse roadsters than good will.
And so I wish my darling health,
And (just to round my couplet) wealth,
With faith enough to bridge the chasm
'Twixt Genesis and Protoplasm,
And bear her o'er life's current vext
From this world to a better next,
Where the full glow of God puts out
Poor reason's farthing candle, Doubt.
What more could godfather devise?
I've wished her healthy, wealthy, wise,
But since there's room for countless wishes
In these old-fashioned posset dishes,
I'll wish her from my plenteous store
Of those commodities two more:
Her father's wit, veined through and through
With tenderness that Watts (but whew!
Julia's aflame, I mean no stricture
On his Sir Josh-surpassing picture).
I wish her next, and 'tis the soul
Of all I've dropped into the bowl,
Her mother's beauty—nay, but two
So fair at once would never do.
Then let her but the half possess,
Troy was besieged ten years for less.
Now if there's any truth in Darwin,
And we from what was, all we are win,
I simply wish the child to be
A sample of Heredity,
Enjoying to the full extent
Life's best, the Unearned Increment,
Which Fate, her Godfather to flout,
Gave *him* in legacies of gout.
Thus, then, the cup is duly filled;
Walk steady, dear, lest all be spilled

EASTNOR CASTLE, *March* 28, 1878.

To J. R. LOWELL.

Your kind letter reached me, or rather us, on the morning of our marriage. I am glad that you have seen my wife and remember her so well. Some day I hope we shall make you welcome again in the old house. Meanwhile we are staying for a bit at this gorgeous castle, which has been lent to us by Lord Somers, the descendant of the British Aristides. There is a big obelisk to that luminary in the park, with an inscription showing how much honour he did to human nature, and the house seems to smell of the immortal principles of the glorious revolution of 1688. Otherwise it, or the corner of it we inhabit, is a most luxurious place of refuge. Our children are coming this afternoon, and we shall be in perfect quiet with them for the next three weeks. . . .

The snow is coming down as if we were in Siberia or Massachusetts. The Malverns look like mountains in the gloom and everything outside is dismal. It seems hard on the unlucky primroses, which were coming out in a reckless way all round us. But inside we are very cosy by huge coal-fires, and I think of a poet who has sung the praises of fireplaces and Nicotia, and hope that we shall worship that goddess together again some day—Somebody here remarks that I write very slowly. So I will not start another sheet. . . .

MADRID, *April* 1, 1878.

J. R. LOWELL *to* LESLIE STEPHEN.

'DEAR STEPHEN,—I am sure you will not think me too late in wishing you joy which I do with all my heart. . . . I cannot fling one of my old shoes after you, because it would be robbing one of a thousand honest fellows of half his *locus standi*. I can't conceive anything more jolly than to be spending your honeymoon in a castle, and without any of the responsibilities which castles (even those in Spain) entail. . . .

'My little bark sails attendant and shares the triumph.

I don't think I ever wrote to a friend in a castle before—except once, and *he* was in what used to be called an *enchanted* one for breach of the peace—and I feel that I give off from my person a kind of subdued splendour by reflection. The final cause of 'the glorious, &c.' was that Lord Somers should be the progenitor of him who is generous enough to lend a castle as ordinary mortals would a shilling. In the name of all the feudal barons at once, how many has he in his pocket? The imagination loses itself in an *O altitudo!*

'Macaulay dated from the storied keep of Windsor, and I might have addressed my letter to *Eastnor* if I were quite sure. But your handwriting baulks me, and I am *not* quite sure. 'In Heaven's name (pardon my initial letter—I can't help it, dear agnostic), why doesn't he direct to the happiest man in England? It would find me!' I hear you mutter. But I shall stick to 'Smith and Elder' for more safety—though I grudge them the castle. . . .

'*Vox clamantis in eremo:* Send me some of your things in the *Cornhill* now and then!'

EASTNOR CASTLE, LEDBURY, *April* 21, 1878.

To J. R. LOWELL.

You have been so unprecedentedly virtuous in writing to me twice that I must rouse myself to reply. I say rouse, for I am painfully returning to business, and have despatched a whole series of letters to contributors this morning. To-morrow we go to town, and this afternoon I am in the agonies of packing up and separating my own books from those which I have borrowed from the library here—I wish it was mine! . . . Our castle is very sumptuous and in a very lovely country. All the correct birds and flowers are coming out in a way to make one quote the British poets, and I could stay here with pleasure for an indefinite time; but Hyde Park Gate South has its charms too, and I suppose that solitude, even of this variety, would be corrupting in the long run. It has already made me hate pen and ink as I think that I never hated them before. I must write a little for very substantial reasons; but I wish that I could

leave the world unenlightened. . . . I hope to send you before long the only bit of writing that I have done lately, a life of Johnson. You know it all by heart already, as it is cribbed from Bozzy; but I hope that you may like to refresh your memory of the old boy—whom I specially love. . . .

Stephen did not leave 'the little backwater of a street' in which he had been living, but moved into the house which had been his wife's, and in which six-and-twenty years afterwards he died.[1] Until in the course of nature it vanishes, it will bear witness to the expansion of his family. First, there was excavation in the garden at the back, and there a sky-lit study was constructed for 'the philosopher.' Afterwards two storeys were added at the top of the house, and in the topmost he passed his working hours with a plentiful expanse of sky to contemplate, and with his 'deists' and other old friends around him. A happy time had begun. Four children were born,[2] and he could not have too many about him. It was a chastened happiness, as will be apparent from his letters, but it was real. No one could be with him long without guessing that he had borne a great weight of sorrow. Rarely was he in high spirits for any length of time, unless he was at play with the children. But for all that, many men who made his acquaintance in those days—the days of his 'Sunday Tramps'—knew him as a delightful companion, who could be merry enough in season, and whose laugh it was good to hear.

His house was by no means a hermit's cell. There was a great deal of coming and going. He would growl at being taken to dinner-parties and having to entertain divers 'bores'; still he submitted and was a cheerful host. I will here give a few words that he wrote long afterwards when he was once more lonely, for they say briefly what has to be said. 'My wife's happiness of course was not of the kind which is noisy

[1] In 1884 this house, which had been '13 Hyde Park Gate South,' became '22 Hyde Park Gate.'

[2] Vanessa, b. 1879; Julian Thoby, b. 1880; Adeline Virginia, b. 1882; Adrian Leslie, b. 1883.

or brilliant or conspicuous. She had withdrawn entirely from society during her widowhood, and I, too, had become a recluse. We had our little society in later years. We went out, and had our parties at home. When the children grew up she took [her daughter] Stella to balls, concerts, and so forth, as became a good mother, and she had a considerable circle of acquaintance and many very attached friends. Neither of us cared for "society," as it is called, very much; and I take it that our household appeared to people who did care for society, as a secluded little backwater, though to me it was not less delicious. Julia used to be "at home" on Sunday afternoons; and though we did not attempt to set up a literary or artistic "salon," I can see her surrounded on such occasions by a very lively and pleasant group. Especially, I may say, she took the keenest possible interest in young people; she was loved and admired in return by many young friends; she was happy in watching their friendships or love-makings, and her pleasure was in itself a refinement and a charm. Her courtesy was perfect—sometimes a tacit rebuke to me, who find courtesy to bores a very difficult duty.'

'A true picture so far as it goes,' says a friend of ours, 'but not quite adequate. The room would be very full on those Sunday afternoons, and there were poets and painters and novelists there, enough to terrify a shy young man; and there was music, good music, which, if thrown away upon Stephen, was not thrown away upon all his guests. And if it is very true that his wife was the sun and centre of the "lively and pleasant group," it was not a merely reflected light that shone in his face. He also could take an interest in "young people," and "be happy in watching their friendships or love-makings." I can remember seeing his face radiant with delight, so radiant that the blue eyes dazzled me,—they "dwell in my memory as if they had left a phosphorescent line,"[1]—and this because two of the young people were happy. If he was discourteous to bores, no doubt they will say so; it is a way they have.'

He had not lost his power of making friends. It was, I

[1] 'The Egoist,' ch. vi.

believe, in his most sorrowful days that he became intimate with William Kingdon Clifford, whose brilliant career was already drawing to a close. In many places has he borne witness to the spell that Clifford laid upon those who knew him : ' A man who was as delightful as a boy, and gave me a more distinct impression of possessing genius than any one, I think, whom I ever knew.' Stephen's letters have much in them of the bravery, the gaiety, with which this ' poor lad,' as he calls him, is facing premature death. Mrs. Clifford has told me how she was ' alarmed ' by her husband's silent friend, and how she heard him laugh for the first time when, suddenly turning the conversation from a mathematical problem in which he professed an interest, he told of his approaching marriage. Then Mrs. Clifford saw Mrs. Stephen ' looking like the Madonna.' She and Leslie came to take leave of Clifford the night before he went abroad to die. ' I shall never forget them. They both looked tall and grave and thin, as if they remembered a world of sorrow, and understood ours, and were half ashamed of the happiness they had recovered for themselves.'

A friendship that lasted much longer and began just at the time of which we have been speaking was that with George Croom Robertson. The beginning of it may be seen in some highly formal letters now lying before me. The editor of *Mind*, a newly founded philosophical journal, would be glad if a copy of the ' History of English Thought ' were sent for review ; but Mr. Stephen leaves all such matters to his publishers.[1] Soon, however, the two men were on intimate terms. Stephen was engaged on his ethical book, and there was nothing that he enjoyed more than a philosophical talk with Robertson. ' To Robertson,' he said, ' I owed much intellectually as well as otherwise.' Stephen used to feel that in philosophical matters Robertson was the true professional, whereas he himself, so he would say, was more or less of an amateur. But at any rate the friendship was warm. It was beautifully expressed in one of those letters about

[1] Robertson reviewed the book at handsome length in *Mind*, July 1877.

dead friends, which no one could write like Stephen.[1] 'No more true-hearted, affectionate, and modest nature has ever revealed itself to me; and if anything could raise my estimate of the quiet heroism with which he met overpowering troubles, it would be his apparently utter unconsciousness that he was displaying any unusual qualities in his protracted struggle against the most trying afflictions.' I see that Stephen treasured a letter which was written to him by his friend's brother—treasured it because it made mention of his wife. 'Times without number, and especially on the day before his death, when I read Mrs. Stephen's letter to him, he told me something of what he owed to you both, and what your love and sympathy did to help him in his last years of trial and trouble.' Friends who never suffered, never knew Stephen or his wife. Of her care for those who were in distress much might be said. 'As for Leslie himself,' so writes to me the most acutely observant of all his friends, 'apart from his gifts, the highest to be said of him is that he was the worthy husband of such a woman.' That is high; but it can be said.

[1] *Spectator*, October 1, 1892: reprinted in 'Philosophical Remains of George Croom Robertson,' 1894, p. xx.

XVI

AN ETHICAL TREATISE

(1878–1882)

Domestic happiness did not make Stephen idle. From 1876 to 1882 he was working—at intervals—on his 'Science of Ethics.'[1] I believe that in one sense he liked it better—that is not saying much—than any of his other books. It showed, so he thought, that if he had not 'scattered himself too much' he might have accomplished a good piece of scientific exposition. Into no other book did he put so much of his straightforward, vigorous thinking. The public has not agreed with him about the relative merit of his various works. Nor is the explanation to be found solely in the small size of that part of the public which will study a tough book on ethical theory. Sidgwick's 'Methods' were much more successful than Stephen's 'Science.' In part this is due, so I think, to Stephen's aberrations from that 'common sense,' to which Sidgwick, after all his subtle divagations, was always returning. Stephen did not conciliate any class of metaphysicians, and yet was not on the side of the vulgar—still less on the side of the angels. Nor could he present his doctrine as part of a vast system as did Herbert Spencer. He did not know half so much of the Unknowable as Spencer knew. However, into the question why it was that Stephen's views of ethics seemed uninteresting to many people—uninteresting as compared with the views of some other men—we must not plunge, for those waters are deep. Remaining on the bank, we may, I think, admit that Stephen had not quite patience enough to be a supremely great

[1] The Preface is dated April 1882.

expositor. Also he had not the advantage—the inestimable advantage—of constantly endeavouring to explain his theories to beginners and to construct a highway in which fools cannot err. Moreover, a philosopher has said to me that in his 'Science of Ethics,' Stephen 'went as near as he could to being dull.' Not very near, I think, but there is a certain point in this saying. When Stephen has captivated us by a charming preface—does it not stand alone among the prefaces of modern philosophers?—some of us resent the gravity and severity of what follows and feel that Stephen is not doing what he can do best, for elsewhere we seldom see him within a measureable distance of being dull. When he reviewed his life, he was inclined to think, and so am I, that he had never allowed himself a fair chance of explaining his philosophical opinions. The world will judge; but that there is yet much life in the 'Science of Ethics' I do not doubt, and it seems possible that, after many aerial flights, which have taken them nowhere, students of moral philosophy will once and again be glad to walk for a while with the great pedestrian. Whatever other praise they may concede or withhold, they will, I think, admit that Stephen's is a brave, veracious and wholesome book.

More essays of the agnostic group, an essay on Thackeray, very difficult to write but eminently good to read, an introduction to Fielding's novels, and a third volume of 'Hours': such were some of the parerga of this time. Then also Stephen had 'fallen a vicitim to Morley's seductions.' He wrote a 'Pope' for the 'Men of Letters'; and the coveted 'Swift' at length fell to his lot. Some letters about Pope will, I think, show us that the future editor of the biographical dictionary could behave well as editee. The 'Science of Ethics' had not seen the light before he was thinking of another big book. What was it to be—a history of English literature or a history of the Utilitarians? At this moment a Biographical Dictionary begins to loom upon the horizon. Then came the revelation that the public was deserting the *Cornhill*. That such letters as passed between George Smith and Leslie Stephen are often passing between publisher and

editor we may hope, if we are optimists; but, at any rate, they are pleasant reading. 'Morley's seductions' had another effect. Stephen had left off writing for the *Pall Mall* at the end of 1871; but when in 1880 that paper hoisted the liberal flag, Stephen went back to journalism once more in order to help Mr. Morley. He wrote for the *Pall Mall* until 1884, reviewing books and contributing some papers of the 'round-about' style concerning his Sunday walks and the like. He was not so far removed from politics that he could not upon occasion blaze into righteous wrath over certain public affairs. If any one cares to see—it is a refreshing sight—how Leslie Stephen could write when he was at white heat, he should look at 'Mr. Bradlaugh and his Opponents' in the *Fortnightly* for August 1880. The style is not at all 'roundabout'; the shirt, we may say, is once more discarded; but few, I believe, would now deny that Stephen said the right word about a disgraceful business.

This premised, we may open another bundle of letters. In passing we remember that in 1880 Lowell became the representative of the United States at the Court of St. James's. One of the sources whence we have been drawing begins to run dry when Stephen can often meet his friend in London.

13 Hyde Park Gate South, *May* 5, 1878.

To Mr. Norton.

An interval has passed since I wrote to you last, which has been a very happy one for me. I did not write to you, for, in truth, I was very lazy; but now that I have come back and settled again in my own house, I like to remind you of my existence. I have as you will see by the above address only moved two doors to the house hitherto occupied by my wife. . . .

June 3, 1878.

. . . I am infinitely happier than seemed possible. I only wish that you could see my wife for five minutes, and you would understand it better. But we both love quiet, and have been grievously vexed by the necessity of doing a large number of solemn dinner-parties of late—

than which, if the wit of man has invented a duller form of entertainment, I have yet to discover it. I think that we have pretty well made up our minds to abandon such amusements as much as we can to people of fewer years and stronger spirits, and to cultivate domestic peace as much as possible This is the quietest London house I have known, and we sit here as undisturbedly in the evenings as if I was in my old college-rooms. When our ceremonial eating and drinking is over, we shall, I hope, subside into permanent calm. . . .

Tunbridge Wells, *Sept.* 21, 1878.

I have been lounging for the last six weeks, most of the time at Falmouth, and the last few days here at my wife's father's. . . . Cornwall is very lovely and sleepy—a glorious sea, perfectly clear and brilliantly blue water against granite cliffs with stretches of bright sand below and heather and gorse above. There are quaint little glens running down to the sea, and the glens shelter comfortable country houses, built by Quakers, whose chief luxury is in filling their gardens with masses of trees and flowers and ferns—all manner of things, tropical and otherwise, growing richly in the soft, damp climate. Each of the gardens is a charming sleepy hollow, which would be still more delightful if old Quaker ladies approved of smoking. We went one day to the Lizard Point and looked out over the Atlantic towards America, but, owing to haze or distance, it is not distinguishable. Still the scenery is very characteristic and grand, with a sense of oceanic mystery. That is not, according to me, quite equal to the mountains ; but it is the next thing to it ; and for purposes of sleepy indolence it is perhaps even better. . . .

13 Hyde Park Gate South, *Dec.* 5, 1878.

We in this house are all well, but everybody seems to be ill around us. Poor [George Henry] Lewes was buried yesterday. I was at their house on Sunday fortnight, and found them nearly alone I had a pleasant talk with Mrs. Lewes, and, though I saw that he was ill and she rather

uncomfortable about him, I had no notion that there was any danger for the present. . . . Poor Clifford too is very ill indeed. . . . I go there pretty often, and they both talk with surprising cheerfulness; but it is sad. . . . Then Holman Hunt has been desperately ill. . . . To add something more cheerful, I may say that I saw Darwin the other day, who seemed to be well for him, and as cheerful and pleasant as usual. There are few people whom I admire more, and I could envy more, if anything were to be got out of envying. I think that I wrote to you about that wonderful meeting of 'liberal thinkers,' which was got up by Conway in the summer.[1] It seems to be coming to life again—rather to my disgust, to say the truth. Huxley and Tyndall are going to take it up, and I shall have to join, if it is launched. . . . Oh, Lord, what bosh will be poured forth if we get the freethinkers together for a palaver!

Oct. 28, 1878.

To J. A. Symonds.

I have received your Shelley[2] with great pleasure. I was curious, as I think I told you, to see what you would make of him, and my curiosity is satisfied in the most agreeable sense. I think that you have made a thoroughly good bit of work out of a very difficult subject. If I don't quite follow you in all your praise of Shelley both as man and poet, I attribute the difference chiefly to my want of poetical sensibility. When I read S., it seems to make my head swim, and I found it very hard to get through the Revolt of Islam, though I have always been very fond of his lyrics. Even the Prometheus does not give me as much pleasure as it ought. I feel as if I was standing on the top of the Wetterhorn—the giddiest place I know in the Alps—and with the peculiar illusion, which one has on high mountains, that the meadows and houses below have become unsubstantial mist.

[1] As to the Association of Liberal Thinkers, *see* 'Autobiography of Moncure Conway,' ii. 352–355.

[2] 'English Men of Letters,' 1878.

That is a confession which at least is frank and would disqualify me from ever criticising S. myself. Yet I also have a feeling, which I cannot get over, of a certain hollowness about all the enthusiasm in the Prometheus, which, I think, is not quite without foundation. Demogorgon is such a vague kind of being that I do not much care about his overthrow. His sudden descent through a kind of aerial trapdoor reminds me of *Punch* and the devil, and I can't help thinking it comic.

Alas! I am getting from bad to worse; but I do recognise, in spite of all, the wonderful lyrical beauty of Prom., and admit that I am probably too earthy to be quite worthy of reading [it].[1]

I will say no more about this for fear of uttering further blasphemies. But I will say that you have made me admire Shelley as a man more than I did before. There, too, I think that a devil's advocate might say something. But I fully believe that, on the whole, you have taken the right line, and that we earthy beings ought really to venerate the moral beauty of the man and not to presume to blame him for being rather too aerial for this world. It is not a fault that many people will imitate . . .

Jan. 4, 1879.

To Mr. Holmes.

I write once more and I begin with a bit of news which will, I am sure, give you pleasure as it has given the highest pleasure to me and mine. The great Sir James has at last been made a judge. . . . Everybody will admit that it is an admirable appointment, and—in short—we are all cock-a-hoop about it. . . . Well, I am talking as if you shared my family feeling more than you can be expected to do. But really the thing interests me so much that I cannot help it. It seems to make one old. I begin to look upon the lives of my contemporaries as wholes. I have seen

[1] *See*, however, 'Playground,' p. 63: 'To my taste, though I speak with diffidence, Shelley's poetry is in the most complete harmony with the scenery of the higher Alps; and I think it highly creditable to the mountains that they should agree so admirably with the most poetical of poets.'

enough of the orbit to calculate the whole of it, and see what it will look like. I can fancy myself writing autobiographical reminiscences and telling how I remember J. F. in the nursery . . . and then tracing his career to college, taking a comprehensive glance at the period, showing how the English climate produces a special type of organism, and so deducing his main characteristics by a fine specimen of *a priori* deduction. Remarks upon Justinian, codification, the British Empire in India, the origin and growth of journalism, graphic sketches of contemporary characters—Lord! I see three fat volumes at least. But I am showing you how my hand is subdued like the dyer's and every reflection presents itself as so much copy. There is, you may guess, a melancholy side to all such things, and I could wish —if I were fool enough to wish for changes that cannot be made—that some people could have foreseen that old J. F. would go about in an ermine robe, who would have been better pleased than I am. But there he is on the top of the pass, long got over the bergschrund and up the snow-slope, and he has a nice bit of tableland before him. Well, he has done his work. He is one of the prosperous. I have been seeing another case lately which shows the seamy side of life. Poor young Clifford . . . has about finished his career at the age of thirty-two or thereabouts. I have been sitting with him a good deal . . . and seen him visibly fading. He has been admirably brave and cheerful. . . . I have grown very fond of him lately, for he is a good, kind-hearted, simple creature. . . .

In a fortnight I am going to have a look at the Alps again in time of snow. I feel that it will probably be a farewell visit, for I am becoming fast tied and bound, and expect my future holidays to be chiefly within the four seas. . . .

Feb. 6, 1879.

To W. K. Clifford.[1]

We were very much pleased to hear that you had got through your voyage tolerably and were finding yourself

[1] Clifford died on March 3.

the better for Madeira. . . . It seems to me an age since you went off that frosty morning and my pleasant visits to Quebec Street came to an end. I have been off to the Alps since then in one of my recurrent attacks of mountain mania. Everybody, including my wife, I am afraid, thought me a fool for going, and the fact that I have come back with unbroken limbs does not in the least change their opinion. As a matter of fact, Switzerland in the winter is just as accessible as England, and much pleasanter in some ways, owing to the comparative scarcity of Englishmen. It was not exactly a sensible proceeding to go there, as I saw nobody except my guide, whose conversation is limited; X, who never says anything at all; and an artist friend of mine, one Loppé—a French painter, who is as great a fool as I am in the matter of Alpine tastes. He gave me a great many lectures, when he was not painting, upon theology, in regard to which his sentiments fall in very well with my own; but I don't know that he threw any new light upon the subject. . . .

I have been reading Huxley's 'Hume,' of which, by the way, there is a review in to-day's *Times*. It is a curious sign that the reviewer . . . manages to praise the book without the least qualification or even a hint that it might possibly contain something calculated to shock the orthodox. I will confess that I did not find it altogether satisfactory. The philosophical statement is certainly very clear and good, and that is the principal point; but I thought that H. was a little too anxious to make Hume a text for his own views, and rather neglected his historical relation. However, it is hypercritical to find fault with so good and vigorous a statement of the man's point. There is always something refreshing to one's soul in Huxley's writing—none of your shuffling and equivocating and application of top-colour. We had rather a good meeting at the Metaphysical, in which he trod rather heavily upon Sidgwick's toes, and Sidgwick displayed that reflective candour which in him becomes at times a

little irritating.[1] A man has no right to be so fair to his opponents. . . .

I have been trying to start a book which I have been planning for some time, and which has some relation to Sidgwick's 'Methods of Ethics.' It is in fact a statement of my own moral theory—by which I don't mean to asssert that I have a moral theory peculiar to myself—the Lord forbid!—but of the most orthodox (in a scientific sense) doctrine upon the subject. I do not want to talk about it at present, partly because just now I am heartily disgusted with my own performance, which may be either a good or a bad symptom—I should much like to talk to you about some of the points which I want to state; but alas! the telephone is not yet arranged to Madeira—or you would be bothered with my remarks pretty often. I hope that we may discuss it hereafter, unless I get so disgusted that the whole thing goes into the fire. I don't suppose that it will (by the way), for I have enough of the author's vanity to prevent such a consummation; but what always vexes me when I write is that my views look so hideously commonplace and obvious when I have got them in black and white that I fancy everybody wondering at my taking the trouble to express them. Let us hope that this peculiar effect is due to their undeniable truth.

However that may be, I am settling down to a good quiet time, as I hope. I seldom go out or see anyone, and am not inclined to get more sociable as I get older—especially when my best friends unkindly go off to Madeira. I must now turn to certain wretched MSS. and put their authors out of misery. It is not right, I fear, to toss up, as it would save me a great deal of trouble, and come to much the same thing in the end. Of all the curses known to mankind, I think that a fidgety conscience is one of the worst. Of course one can choke it off upon grand occasions; but it is a worrying, vexatious article in daily life. . . .

[1] *See* 'Memoir of Henry Sidgwick,' p. 223.

Feb. 16, 1879.

To Mr. John Morley.

. . . I will undertake 'Pope,' if you please, without any definite pledge as to time. He will want a good deal of reading, but he is certainly a curious subject and ought to make an amusing, though hardly an agreeable, portrait. I feel really obliged to you for making me do 'Johnson,' for he has been the cause of more compliments to me than anything, perhaps everything, that I have ever done before. My vanity has been tickled.

March 3, 1879.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I took it into my head to make a little pilgrimage to the Alps the other day, and revisited some of my favourite haunts, Grindelwald, Meiringen, and so forth. I cannot well get away now in the summer, and I take an indefinable pleasure in seeing the old places, all asleep in the quiet snow. I don't know anything of the kind that gives me such keen pleasure, though it is rather melancholy too; but I will not speculate upon the reason. . . .

Poor Mrs. Cameron—you know her photographs if you did not know her—died suddenly in Ceylon. She was the sister of my wife's mother. . . . She was a very fine character, as unselfish and generous as it was possible for a woman to be, and with the temperament, at least, of genius. . . . It was impossible to see her without growing to be enthusiastic about her. . . .

I have undertaken two jobs of which I begin to repent. One is to write upon Pope for Morley's series. Pope has always interested me, and I cannot help liking him, and yet one cannot poke into any bit of his history without finding some new lie and meanness. To tell the story so as to excuse my sneaking affection, and yet so as to bring out the facts, strikes me, now that I have had time to think, as a very awkward job. Then I have been asked by G. Smith to write a kind of essay upon Thackeray's works, which is to appear at the end of a luxurious edition now coming out.

I cannot write a life—for innumerable and conclusive reasons ; nor can I write without saying many things which I have no right or wish to say. However, G. Smith imagined that I could write a something—an exposition or survey, or I don't know what, and I have half engaged to do it. I shall try, but I have half a mind to give it up. The longer I live, the less interest I seem to take in the fate of my various performances, though I am as much or more interested in the work itself. That sounds, now that I have put it down, like a very moral, perhaps rather Pecksniffian, sentence. However, I will let it go, as I fancy that it is true enough. . . .

May 18, 1879.

To J. R. Lowell.

. . . I am sitting quietly amongst my books this Sunday morning and could make some edifying reflections, which are, I dare say, being uttered in sermons ; only they don't affect me so much in that shape as when I make them for myself. They are not very original, however, and I will not bestow many of them upon you. You have observed, like other moral philosophers, that time flies. 'At my back I always hear Time's winged chariot hurrying near'—as the poet observes, and yet I don't think that I have grown much older in the last year or two. . . . I am working at a book of a quasi-philosophical kind, and trying to make it as short as possible ; which makes the writing all the longer. Just now I am partly engaged in editing the remains of poor young Clifford, who was a real man of genius—a wonderful mathematician, they tell me—and singularly ingenious and vigorous in speculations which I can appreciate better. . . . I hope it [the book of remains] will do well, but it is naturally rather fragmentary, and its sentiments are not of the kind generally thought edifying—or I should not be the editor. . . .

I only hope that it [the expected baby] will be of the right sex, *i.e.*, the feminine, as I need hardly say. I like some particular boys ; but the genus boy seems to me one

of nature's mistakes. Girls improve as they grow up; but the boy generally deteriorates, and, in our infernal system, has to be sent away to school and made into more or less of a brute. Not but what I have a very good pair of boys. . . .

I believe that I hate writing letters as much as you, and am almost as unprincipled. But do send me a line. It will be a real pleasure to me to see your hand again, and our eldest boy, who has an insane mania, now epidemic among children, will be glad of the Spanish stamp. I throw that in by way of additional inducement. . . .

June 1, 1879.

To J. R. Lowell.

. . . I said nothing to you of politics; because, in truth, that department of the world seems to me to be given over for the present to the devil, in whom I entertain a kind of provisional belief, so long as things go on in this perverse fashion. Indeed, a diplomatist must, I should think, become very orthodox so far. The sight of wife and child is the best argument I know against the supremacy as well as the existence of the foul fiend. . . .

July 7, 1879.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I should be glad if you would tell me precisely why I feel so much as if Lowell had been my friend for a life-time when, in fact, I have seen him so little. I suppose, generally speaking, because he is one of the most obviously genuine and true-hearted of men. Anyhow there are very few people for whom I should feel so much.[1] . . .

New Quay, Cornwall, *Sept.* 10, 1879.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . This is the kind of place I love next to the Alps. . . . We have not seen a soul for five weeks, except my brother-in-law,[2] who happened to be passing, and the

[1] Mrs. Lowell was seriously ill at Madrid. [2] Mr. Herbert Fisher.

more lonely I am, the more I feel in love with solitude. I could find it in my heart to settle here altogether, though I have no doubt that it would be a bad thing for me to lose touch of my fellow creatures. One does better by keeping in the ranks the greater part of the time, and I have many ties which would snap if I left London. So I shall return and bury myself in my study. . . . A. writes to me asking me to attack poor old B. (he is just my own age, but I call him old in the offensive sense) for his life of Y., which is just coming out. I wanted to slaughter him when he biographized X., and here is another chance. Somehow all my pugnacity seems to have gone, and I do not feel disposed to throw away powder and shot on so poor an animal. Besides, I know that he is dreadfully thin-skinned, and I don't feel bound to give him any more pain. . . . Morley has just done 'Burke' for his own series, and done it, I think, exceedingly well. To read Morley always makes me envious, and then I try to choke down the bad passion, and hope that I succeed. . . . Pleasant news from Afghanistan! C. D. was in the true politician's frame of mind, which amused me, who am a little outside such things. He was curious to know how the news affected me, because, he said, that would enable him to guess how it would affect the average Conservative—not very complimentary! He is a clever fellow, and I like him in spite of his politics. . .

13 Hyde Park Gate South, *Dec.* 12, 1879.

To Mr. John Morley.

I have just written the last lines of 'Pope,' and feel as if a halter had been taken off my neck. . . .

Brighton, *Feb.* 21, 1880.

I cannot honestly say that I shall have pleasure in complying with your request. On the contrary, I do not at all like cutting out twenty-four pages of work that has given me a good deal of trouble. But I know, of course, that you must necessarily be guided by obvious considerations,

which have nothing to do with the fancies of an author, and, moreover, I know that the fault is mine in the first place for exceeding my tether. Also I am not vain enough about my work to hold that all excision is necessarily an injury. Considering all which, I am prepared to say that I submit without murmuring (though not without an inward groan) to your decisions. Only I will still say that if you could see your way to remitting part of the sentence, your petitioner would be very grateful, and ever pray &c. . . .

BRIGHTON, *Feb.* 23, 1880.

. . Say what you think right, and it shall be done without another word. I would rather cut out forty-eight pages than show any ill-temper about such a matter to such an editor. . . .

BRIGHTON, *Feb.* 5, 1880.

To MR. NORTON.

. . . The pleasantest thing of which I have heard for a long time is Lowell's appointment. It will be a great delight to me to see him again, and I look forward to as many pleasant talks with him as his ministerial engagements will allow. . . . I have a young friend, R. Louis Stevenson —a very promising author, who has written several articles for me, and a very pretty book about a journey in France with a donkey, which you may possibly have seen. He is now—God knows why—in San Francisco, and appears to be fixed there for some time. He writes to ask me for American introductions. I know few people now in the U.S. and nobody in California; but he may be drifting eastward, and, should he drift to you, I should be obliged if you would take any notice of him and give him any hints that come in your way. He is a bit of a Bohemian: a son of rigid Scotch presbyterians, who has refused to run in the regular traces and somehow wandered into literature—but a really good fellow, I believe, and certainly straightforward and honourable so far as I know. I shall tell him that I have sent you a line; but, after all, you are

not very likely, I guess, to see him. He has just sent me, by the way, an article about Thoreau, which I have not read, but it will probably appear in the *Cornhill*,[1] and might give you a taste of his quality.

April 28, 1880.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . Here we have been absorbed in this strange election business.[2] It has taken every one altogether by surprise, and me as much as any one. It amuses me now to look in at the Athenæum, and see all the young gentlemen, Trevelyan and Fawcett, and so forth, waiting for some crumbs to fall from the table of the Liberals. . . . This, by the way, suggests a rather curious bit of news, which I can tell you, as by the time it reaches you it will be public property. The *Pall Mall Gazette* has been the incarnation of Greenwood, and, as you know, the most thorough-going of Jingo newspapers. [Change of proprietorship.] A transformation is to take place, probably next Monday, in virtue of which the *P.M.G.* will appear as a Liberal organ. I am a good deal amused by the catastrophe, which will shock many virtuous old Tories, to whom the *P.M.G.* appeared as a kind of Abdiel. I fancy also that the experiment will be a very ticklish one, as it must clearly involve the loss of a great many of the old audience. Smith has been to me this morning asking me to give him or his son-in-law a little help at the start, and asking me also to apply to Morley, which sounds like asking the Abp. of Canterbury to contribute to Mr. Bradlaugh's *National Reformer*. I have been laughing to myself; but the secret is still a secret for a few days.[3] . . . We shall spend the summer at Falmouth again. . . .

July 17, 1880.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . Lowell dined with us last night and was very pleasant, and to all appearance in the highest possible spirits. . . . I

[1] *Cornhill*, June 1880.
[2] The Liberal triumph of 1880.
[3] The change took place on Monday, May 3.

have had to go in for journalising again to help my friend Morley in his attempt to start the *P.M. Gazette* again. What will be the end of the affair is more than I know. It is a hard fight between the *P.M.G.* under its new captain and the new *St. James's* with the old commander, Greenwood. . . . I am glad to be taking a holiday, for the business of article-writing is very abhorrent to me now. I like to have more time and space to turn myself round in, and not to write with a printer's devil round the corner. . . .

FALMOUTH, *Aug.* 5, 1880.

To MR. NORTON.

. . . I note what you say about our present leaders in a literary way, and agree with you, I think. Certainly there is no one now who is to the rising generation what Mill and Carlyle were to us; nor have we a really good novelist or any poet of high rank to replace the old idols. One might speculate upon causes and I daresay write a good essay upon the subject. The thing to be said *per contra* is, I think, that, though first-rate names are conspicuously wanting, there is, or seems to be, a great stirring and moving of thought in various directions, and one hopes that something may come of it in a new generation. . . .

All the row [following the General Election of 1880] has worried me, as I had for a time to put on my rusty old armour of journalism and join in the fray. But I shall do little more in that line. I have got my blessed ethical essay, of which I told you, into a state such that I expect to set to work again next winter, re-write it all, and turn it out for good or evil. So long as I have something of the kind to grind at I am satisfied. . . .

I have been amusing myself down here with reading Browning—some of him for the first time; and I wonder more and more at his extraordinary power occasionally, and at its waste in some directions. I think him marvellously good when at his best. But my paper allows no criticism.[1]

[1] Eight sides being full.

Feb. 12, 1881.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I have just come back from a short trip to the Alps. I like to go there occasionally, partly by way of pilgrimage to certain holy places—holy for me—and partly because the walk always seems to set me up. I found them as delightful as usual, and all the more delightful because in the winter one has them to oneself. I ended, however, at Davos, where there is now a whole colony of invalids. Amongst them is J. A. Symonds, who tells me that he knew you. [State of his health.] I admire him for his energy in writing big books full of information in such a bookless wilderness, and I like him heartily for his kindliness and courage. But it is not a cheerful state of things. . . .

I came back also to hear of Carlyle's death, who, poor old man, must have felt that the evils which he prophesied were gathering pretty thickly. He and George Eliot—he much more than G. E.—seem to leave a terrible gap behind them. I am glad to have known him, and sorry that I saw no more of him lately. I can't tell whether it was my shyness or my penetration that persuaded me that he was rather bored than otherwise by seeing me; and so I have pretty much dropped off from going there. Froude and Lecky and Allingham were very faithful and kind to him, it seems; but he must have felt that he was kept waiting a weary time. I am glad that Stanley did not get him, and that he was buried quietly and silently at Ecclefechan. It was the only appropriate end. . . .

I am very well: better than I used to be, I think, for I have set up an institution for Sunday walking,[1] which gives me a very useful stimulus, and I am now settling down to finish off that miserable ethical essay which has been lying heavily upon my soul. I had never before realised the bother of writing anything of a philosophical kind. It wants so much going over and fitting in of arguments and patching up and pulling to pieces and setting straight again that I am often disposed to lose all patience—espe-

[1] The Sunday Tramps.

cially as it is obvious that I shall only at the outside put a very old dog into a slightly improved doublet. Still, a few months' labour will roll the burden off my back, and I shall kick up my heels and rejoice. . . .

July 26, 1881

To Mr. Norton.

I was very glad to get your letter this morning. It incites me to write a line before leaving for our holiday, especially as I ought to send you the enclosed [list of subscribers to a memorial of Carlyle]. The subscription has been a great deal checked by the row about the 'Reminiscences.' I scarcely know whether we ought to apply to people on your side. There was a talk about it at the Committee, and they wanted to know whether an advertisement in any American paper would be desirable. My impression was rather against it. However, I send you the list, and leave it to your judgment whether to mention it to any one. There will be enough for a statue at Chelsea, but hardly for anything more, as had been contemplated.

We have lost poor Dean Stanley. My wife went to the funeral yesterday. I did not, because I find funerals so painful that I only go when it is a question of not hurting somebody's feelings. But I am sorry for Stanley, for he was really a man of fine and generous nature, though he was not much of a philosopher. There is nobody left among the parsons whose death would cause a fiftieth part of the regret to outsiders. I guess that he will be succeeded by Farrar, who is just the man to impose upon a rhetorician like Gladstone.

Pont by Fowey, Cornwall, *Aug* 8, 1881

To George Smith.

. . . I have been expecting a first instalment of Fielding. I took your copy here without asking your leave, as I wanted to read up some of it for the purposes of my essay. . . . We are in a quaint hole at the bottom of a Cornish glen, communicating with our butcher by a series of cunning

stratagems, and regarding shops as curious inventions of an advanced stage of civilisation. The children are all rosy and happy ; so we regard it as a success ; but we should be better pleased if we saw the sun a little oftener. It is impossible to get anywhere, except by going for a cruise in a huge barge, which can come within a mile of us when the tide is up, or by crossing three young mountains in a rickety pony-carriage. For want of a drag, the boys and I have to haul from behind whenever it goes down hill, and to shove whenever it is going up hill—which is nine-tenths of the road—and if we meet a cart we are in luck if there is an available siding within a quarter of a mile. So we stay at home a good deal and look at the rain. However, the life is favourable to meditation, and I have been thinking a good deal about biographies universal and otherwise.[1] . . .

Oct. 23, 1881.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I hope that the change of presidents will not cause Lowell to leave us prematurely, not only because it will be a loss to us personally when he goes, but also because I think that he has been really very useful here. Everybody speaks well of him, and I should say that he was about the most popular minister on record, and, though such things are easily exaggerated, I fancy that the presence of such a man tends to promote good feeling between the two countries. The interest in poor Garfield here was really touching, and, though that will be forgotten soon enough, as all things are forgotten, it is really pleasant to see that the first impression of the average Briton now is distinctly to sympathise with the United States. Ten or twenty years ago people would have sympathised, but not so heartily or spontaneously, and that is so far an undeniable gain. . . . Goldwin Smith is here and making himself heard a good deal. I have not yet seen him, and see so few people that I am not very sure of seeing him at all ; but I hope that I may, for I have a great liking for him. I met Froude

[1] First sign of the Dictionary.

yesterday in the park (of whom I am naturally reminded by his antithesis) but I only just shook hands with him. He has not been torn to pieces yet for his Carlyle business. . . .

I have at last begun to give the final touching up to my ethical treatise—that sounds a big word, and I feel myself impertinent for writing upon such a big topic. . . . I shall not get to the printing, to say nothing of publishing, however, for the next two or three months. . . . I doubt whether I should have found Cobden a very inspiring text for a sermon; but Morley is sufficiently immersed in politics to believe in creatures of that kind, and Cobden had, I suppose, a touch of genius in him. . . .

I do not get beyond a general impression that things in Ireland are in a mess—which is one of those propositions that do not require any ghost to proclaim to us—and a devout wish that the Irish might be left to settle their own quarrels and see how they liked it. I should repeal the Union to-morrow; but people here do not seem to be of my way of thinking just yet.

Did I tell you that I have bought a little house at St. Ives, down at the very toe-nail of England? . . . The children will be able to run straight out of the house to a lovely bit of sand and have good air and quiet. But it makes me feel more than ever that my locomotive powers are getting terribly hampered. With six children hanging on to my skirts, I have little hope of ever getting farther away than Cornwall, except in imagination.

Jan. 4, 1882.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I have sent my ethical speculation to the printer's, and I hope to send you a copy of it before long. . . . I like my books whilst I am at work, and, when the work is over, I take a disgust for them. . . . I have undertaken to do 'Swift' for Morley, whose hands are too full of the *Pall Mall Gazette* to allow of his doing it himself. I also thought Swift the pick of the whole series, and, the more

I read, the more I am interested in him. Morley has made a great success of his 'Cobden,' though, I must confess, the man remains slightly uninteresting to me. Meanwhile, Morley's journalism is a pretty hard fight. He gives distinction, but the *Pall Mall* and the *St. James's* run a race which, I guess, is unprofitable to both. . . .

Jan. 4, 1882.

To Mr. Edmund Gosse.

I see that we are both victims to Morley's seductions. You cannot help me on account of Gray (and I am very glad to hear that you have taken him up) and I have taken Swift off Morley's hands, and am now getting absorbed in him. If I cannot make an interesting book out of such a hero I deserve to be excommunicated. That 'great work' is at the printer's—the Lord be praised!—and I hope to forget all about it in a few months; but meanwhile Swift and Fielding and the final getting that incubus through the press are enough to occupy all my spare time and a little more.

April 22, 1882

To Mr. James Sully.

I saw Spottiswoode yesterday at the Club, and heard from him that they are considering the propriety of a burial [of Charles Darwin] in Westminster Abbey. To me it would seem more congenial to bury the dear old man in that quiet little churchyard close to the house in which he lived and worked so long. Nor can I feel comfortable at the thought of a possible theological brabble over his grave. However, the matter is still unsettled, but I presume that notice will be given. Every one seems anxious to go; as indeed we must all desire to do what we can in honour of the noble old hero of science.

June 10, 1882.

To Mr. Norton.

I ordered my book to be sent to you. I am heartily glad to have it off my hands. I shall, indeed, have to run the

gauntlet of critics, and I think that for an old hack author I am as silly and thinskinned as a man can well be. However, I shall shut my eyes as much as may be, for I have not yet settled whether praise or blame worries me most. . . .

Gladstone seems to be anxious to justify everything that old Thomas ever said in his most pessimistic state about the incapacity of 'miserable creatures having the honour to be' &c.; and parliamentary performances are a sight for gods and men. I read the *Pall Mall*, and am glad to see that Morley sticks to his colours and talks the only sense I ever hear. . . . Have you heard of Morley's giving up the *Fortnightly?* . . . Anyhow, the *Fortnightly* will be spoilt. There is some talk of his starting another magazine. . . .

I am finishing Swift and shall then be all abroad. I shall moon about for a time before settling to a fresh piece of work. Can you suggest any task for me? I have thought sometimes of a history of English literature, which would be a big enough task to take me the rest of my life; but I have incidentally prepared myself for it a good deal, and it might be worth doing. Or, more narrowly, though that too is big enough, for a history of the Utilitarians, starting from Hume and coming down through Bentham to the Mills and perhaps H. Spencer. What do you think of that? I should make the history short and give my own theories—when I have got them. Or possibly my reflections may suggest something more in the way of original speculation. How does it strike you? . . .

July 19, 1882.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I don't read reviews of myself when I can help it. The only one, known to me, from which I expect to receive any real enlightenment will be published in the next *Mind*, by Henry Sidgwick. I felt great difficulty in knowing what to say and what to leave unsaid. . . .

I have seen Lowell several times lately. He has been a great deal bothered lately by the abuse in your papers,

and chiefly (as I guess) by the suspicion that Arthur would be glad of his resignation. He seems, however, to see clearly that he could not resign without confessing himself to be in the wrong; and therefore, I hope and believe, will not think of such a step. . . .

St. Ives, *Aug* 2, 1882.

To George Smith.[1]

I am sorry to hear of Mr. X's announcement. I wish that I could talk to you instead of writing; because we could sooner come to a thorough understanding. There cannot, indeed, be much difference in principle; but I am afraid that I do not come to the same practical conclusion. Anyhow, I will tell you frankly what I think.

I said in the *édition de luxe* essay that Thackeray's representatives thought themselves bound not to publish a life. I consulted [Mrs. Ritchie] before writing this; and I feel myself bound by it not to do anything more in a biographical direction. Indeed, for every reason, I am quite clear upon that point. I do not know how far you agree with me; but my mind is so far made up.

I am in more doubt as to the hitherto uncollected fragments. I have the strongest objection to the publication of such papers so long as one can avoid it; and so far you will agree with me I only doubt how far the case will be altered by Mr. X's performance. There are, of course, cases in which publication in self-defence becomes necessary, as when writings are inaccurately printed or falsely attributed. But that does not quite apply to the present case.

If I were to edit Thackeray's fragments, I should be giving them some additional authority. I might also be able, and, if so I should be bound, to publish some which had escaped Mr. X. If so, I should be doing the same thing

[1] I give this letter at length as it may be of interest to Thackerayans. Two volumes of theretofore uncollected papers were added to the 'Standard Edition' of 1883–1885, and then to other editions. *See* Stephen's life of Thackeray in 'Dict. Nat. Biog.,' and in vol. xiii. of Mrs. Ritchie's 'Biographical Edition.'

which I complain of him for doing. If (to make the case my own) somebody were to publish writings of mine against my will, I should not (I think) publish them on my own authority or give a more complete edition. I should be anxious to leave all the responsibility to the publisher and to disavow complicity of any kind. Otherwise, though I might not be suspected of collusion, people might at least think that I did not seriously object to the publication, but only to publication by another person.

I feel, too, that I should like to have my hands quite free in regard to Mr. X. I should like to be able to publish an article saying that I thoroughly disapprove of his proceeding; that I thought it disgraceful to him and unfair to Thackeray; and if at the same time I took occasion to edit the fragments myself, I feel as if the force of my protest would be rather weakened.

There is, I think, a difference in this respect between the publisher's and the editor's point of view. But I feel that the question is rather a difficult one. I am confident that I could never be going far wrong by consenting to any request of yours. And yet, in this case I feel that I ought to keep on the safe side and be rather over-scrupulous than otherwise. I want to be in the very strongest position possible, so that nobody can say with the slightest appearance of justification that I have done anything whatever to give additional currency to any publication of which I am not quite certain that Thackeray would himself have sanctioned it.

This is my instinctive judgment at the moment. Reflection or a talk with you might possibly modify my opinion; but at present I feel compelled to say that I cannot do as you ask. That would be always of itself an annoyance to me; but I know that you will do justice to my motives.

We are having lovely weather here, and the place is perfectly charming. I think that we have made a great hit in taking the house, which is perfect for our requirements. I shall, I hope, come back ready to write and edit biographies by the dozen.

St Ives, *Aug.* 17, 1882.

To Mr. John Morley.

. . . You may most certainly count upon me to help you if I can in your new venture, if it comes off.[1] You make me a little nervous by the importance which you attach to my help. I will certainly say nothing against my own merits as a writer, and they have been sufficiently, or more than sufficiently, recognised by good judges. But it remains a great fact that I don't draw. The public is indifferent to me, and, though my name would be a respectable item in your list of contributors, I don't think that I could write the kind of article that tells upon circulation. My best successes in that line were one or two articles in the *Fortnightly*, and they were curiously more attractive of notice than anything else I have done.[2] All which I have slipped into saying because, as I write, it occurs to me that the kind of help which I could give you would be to the more solid part of the concern. So, *e.g.*, I could write some articles more or less in continuation of my book, or rather upon certain problems suggested to me by the book—as the theory of toleration, the relation of morals to politics, and certain lively topics of a similar kind. I see in imagination such titles on a placard of the new organ, and don't feel as if I should buy it in consequence. . . . It occurs to me to add that I am rather uncertain about my own occupations. G. Smith, when I last saw him, was keen about that biographical scheme. If that should be got under weigh, my time would be a good deal taken up for a year or two, though I think that I should take occasion to drop the *Cornhill*. . . .

Oct. 13, 1882.

To J. A. Symonds.

. . . The Biography of which I spoke to you is coming to the birth, though it would be premature to say anything about it to the public. I had a long talk about it with

[1] A projected magazine. Mr Morley, however, became editor of *Macmillan's*.
[2] The 'Agnostic' essays.

Smith last summer, and convinced him (partly from a wise suggestion of yours) that it would be impossible to make a satisfactory biography of the universal kind, and that we shall have quite enough on our hands by undertaking an English biography. That will be a big job enough in all conscience, and at the same time will allow one to give room enough to individual articles to make them tolerably readable. Perhaps I shall try some day to get an article or two out of you. Meanwhile the scheme is still embryonic. . . .

You make me blush by speaking of my energy when I think of the work you have done under far greater difficulties of all kinds. I have been all but absolutely lazy for three months, but I must now buckle to.

Oct. 10, 1882.

To Henry Sidgwick.

I have, as perhaps it is a duty to say, read your criticism of my book.[1] I will not say that you have given no twinges to my vanity; but I will say that I am in perfect charity with my critic. I should have preferred it if you had been a convert and admitted that every word I said was true, but I am quite satisfied to have a candid and generous critic, and that you could not cease to be without ceasing to be yourself. Most of the points at issue between us would require a treatise instead of a letter. . . . On one point your criticism proves itself. If I have not made my line of argument clear to you, I have certainly failed in a literary sense. I am partly conscious of this, though I think that I could have obviated the criticism by a more careful articulation of the logical framework. I cannot admit, however, that this implies real confusion of thought, though I agree that in some cases I may have been confused in my language upon particular points. The distinction between the two points of view, which (briefly) give the vitality test and the utilitarian test, is to my mind fundamental; but I cannot try to pack into a nutshell, *i.e.*, on to

[1] *Mind*, Oct. 1882.

this sheet of paper, my application of this to the plan of the book. I felt all along that this would be one of the difficulties. . . . One thing let me say by the way. You speak of me as exaggerating the novelty of the evolutionist theory, and specially by overlooking Comte. If I have done so it was through carelessness of expression. The fact is that I consider myself to have learnt very much from Comte, and I take a higher estimate of him than most people do, especially the scientific people who object to his religion. I only think that evolutionists have made his theory workable and have brought it into a quasi-scientific state more thoroughly than he could do. But I agree that much of my morality is contained in his.

You and I are too old authors not to have learnt the vanity of vanities as applied to an author's ambition, and I try daily to learn it more thoroughly. My chief moral doctrine in practice is that all real happiness (after that which depends upon the stomach) consists in the domestic and friendly affections, and, as a practical moral—to wind up my remarks in the orthodox way—I hope that we shall always be friends in private in spite of any little skirmishes in print.

Nov. 14, 1882.

To Mr. James Sully.

. . . I read your review in the *P.M.G.* knowing it to be yours, both from Morley's statement and from internal evidence. It gave me real pleasure, which reviews very seldom do, and especially for one thing which you said, and which I shall not specify. . . . As to the book itself, and the reviewers thereof, I am, as I think I must have confessed to you, foolishly irritable and sensitive as a subject of criticism. I read few criticisms of myself because I scarcely can read one which does not make me sore and savage for a little time afterwards. Yours was an exception. I have, however, a feeling that the book is on the whole a failure. I have, I think, not succeeded in making my meaning simple and straightforward enough; and anyhow,

certain remarks which have been made to me by friends have given me a certain feeling of discouragement. It matters very little. I shall shake off my depression soon enough, and go to work again.

Oct. 31, 1882.

To George Smith.

I have been thinking over our conversation, and have two or three things to say which can be said best on paper.

I have nothing to suggest in the way of alteration of our [biographical] scheme; or nothing worth mentioning now.

I think that there is a good piece of work to be done if I can do it; and I hope that I may be more successful in that than in other things. I did not see Payn after I left you, and, of course, I shall say nothing to him without your consent. I know, however, that he will be anxious to hear about my plans, and I think that it will be well for me to tell him as soon as may be that I have decided to give up the *Cornhill*. I shall put it on the ground of my desire to be as free as possible from other work when I have taken up the biography. Payn has, I know, the scruples that I mentioned to you, and I am afraid that if I ask him to undertake the *Cornhill*, he may make some difficulties. If, however, I tell him distinctly that I shall in no case go on with it, I shall at least remove any reasonable scruples. As there is already a rather pressing question about the new novel for the *Cornhill* (to begin in March) I think that my successor should have a voice in the matter. I would not have Payn start with a novel on hand which he disliked, and I am afraid that that would be the result of my choosing one just now.

After what you told me about the state of the *Cornhill* I feel that I must in any case retire. The difficulties in the way of making it a serious magazine, like the *Fortnightly*, seem to me enormous. To take the *Fortnightly* tone in regard to politics and theology would be to frighten away all our old readers, and I should necessarily take that tone or something like it. Nor do I fancy that at present there

is much room for such an organ. On the other hand, I think that it may very well be made lighter; but I am equally clear that I am not the man who could do it. As our present road leads downhill, and I cannot take either of the ways which might possibly lead upwards, the conclusion is clear.

This leads to the other thing which I wish to say. It would be idle to deny that your revelation to me of our state has given me a very uncomfortable feeling. I had suspected something of the kind, but my suspicions were short of the reality. I am deeply vexed to think that my rule has been so prejudicial in a commercial sense. I know that you were perfectly sincere in all that you said about the goodness of the magazine and the bad taste of the public. That you should speak so kindly does not surprise me, for it is only one more proof of the unfailing delicacy and generosity which have marked all your behaviour to me for many years. But I cannot flatter myself that another man might not have succeeded in making the magazine at once light and good. I see the fault clearly, though I do not see how I, being what I am, could have avoided it:—which proves again that I am very ill qualified to be the editor of such a periodical.

I put this down in black and white partly to show that I am heartily sensible of your kindness. You would not, I fancy, doubt my gratitude if I did not express it; but I could not be at ease if I kept silence; and I did not manage —and seldom can manage—to express myself by word of mouth.

There is, however, one thing more which I tried to say, and failed in saying. I am rather depressed about my work. I have done my best, but it does not seem as if I made much impression upon any one—certainly not upon the 'general reader.' The best remedy for the depression is, as I very well know, to go on working. But it gives me some qualms in regard to the biography. It is, of course, a kind of work for which I am better fitted, as I shall have to appeal to a different audience and get the approval of

more serious students. Still it is a new venture, and I cannot tell how I shall succeed. At times, as I told you, I feel rather appalled. If you could get a more vigorous editor, and employ me as a chief contributor, I sometimes fancy that it might be better. But if it is to be, I can only ask you to consider the matter fully and to promise me, at any rate, to let me know at once if I disappoint you. I do not want to lead you into fresh loss; and indeed I should feel miserable if I thought that I was doing so.

That is about all that I have to say, and I think that you will understand me. I had forgotten to repair one omission. I do not think that I said yesterday that the terms you proposed seemed to me only too liberal as regards myself and, so far as I can judge, as regards others also.

Believe me to be, my dear Smith,
Ever yours sincerely and gratefully,
L. Stephen.

Nov. 14, 1882.

To Mr. Edmund Gosse.

Your letter is one of the kindest and pleasantest I ever received. It is something for an editor not to give positive offence, and it is difficult to feel that in any case he can deserve gratitude, for it is plainly his interest to accept good articles, and in a case like yours the only real question must be whether one can have the good luck to anticipate other editors. However, I value kindly feeling such as you display far too highly to be able to argue against it. I shall keep the reins for another month or so, and I shall certainly welcome an article from you, regretting with old Johnson the necessity of pronouncing the word 'last.'

Your letter encourages me to say what I should have said anyhow. The 'Dictionary' will be a very heavy bit of work. It will be a great help to me if I may ask you for a life now and then. I will not ask anything definite at present, as the details as to space, &c., are at present rather vague. . . . One matter in particular will require to be settled soon. I shall want a good sub-editor—a man of knowledge, good

at abstracting, looking up authorities, and so forth, and an efficient whip in regard both to printers and contributors. If you happen to know of any such man I should be much obliged by a suggestion. . . .

It is still a secret (not very profound, but not to be revealed generally) that my successor will be J. Payn, whom I think you know. He is the best of good fellows in the good sense of the word.

XVII

TRAMPS AND CONTRIBUTORS

(1879—1891)

This chapter may begin with a few words from Mr. Meredith. 'When that noble body of scholarly and cheerful pedestrians, the Sunday Tramps, were on the march, with Leslie Stephen to lead them, there was conversation which would have made the presence of a shorthand writer a benefaction to the country. A pause to it came at the examination of the leader's watch and Ordnance map under the western sun, and word was given for the strike across country to catch the tail of a train offering dinner in London, at the cost of a run through hedges, over ditches and fallows, past proclamations against trespassers, under suspicion of being taken for more serious depredators in flight. The chief of the Tramps had a wonderfully calculating eye in the observation of distances and the nature of the land, as he proved by his discovery of untried passes in the higher Alps, and he had no mercy for pursy followers. I have often said of this life-long student and philosophical head that he had in him the making of a great military captain. He would not have been opposed to the profession of arms if he had been captured early for the Service, notwithstanding his abomination of bloodshed. He had a high, calm courage, was unperturbed in a dubious position, and would confidently take the way out of it which he conceived to be the better.'[1]

The descent from the prose of the poet to the prose of the annalist will be painful; but it falls to me here to say somewhat of the origin and doings of the goodly company, fellow-

[1] *The Author*, April 1, 1904.

ship or brotherhood of the Sunday Tramps. Now the foundation thereof was on this wise. Stephen, as has been said, had made friends with George Croom Robertson, the editor of *Mind*, and he had been editing Clifford's papers in collaboration with Sir F. Pollock. Late in 1879 they with a few companions arranged to take long Sunday walks. The original members of the society, about ten in number, were for the more part addicted to philosophy, but there was no examination, test, oath or subscription, and in course of time most professions and most interests were represented. The following canticle, written by Mr. A. J. Butler, was carefully preserved by Stephen. It recalls the spirit of the newly-born institution.

THE BALLADE OF THE SUNDAY TRAMPS.

If weary you grow at your books
  Or dyspeptical after you've dined,
If your wife makes remarks on your looks,
  If in short you feel somewhat inclined
  For fresh air and a six hours' grind
And good metaphysical talk—
  With a party of writers in *Mind*
  You should go for a Sabbath day's walk.

Leave the town by the earliest train
  (In your Bradshaw betimes underlined)
With umbrella in case it should rain,
  Enduring of sun and of wind—
  'Tis no harm if they toughen your rind—
Your boots you'll remember to caulk,
  Your pockets with sandwiches lined,
  You are good for a twenty-mile walk.

Though surely we all by our rule
  Are as peripatetics defined,
Yet each philosophical school
  Is here with each other combined:
  Idealists, realists, find
Representatives here, as we stalk
  In the breezes, like them unconfined,
  Over hills of clay, gravel, or chalk.

ENVOY.

So, Prince, leave your troubles behind,
And resolving for one day to baulk
Black care, with the writers in *Mind*
Go forth for your Sabbath day's walk.

A. J. B., *April* 3, 1881.

Stephen kept in a note-book the records of the society. To each member as he joined was allotted a number so that the tale might be brief. I will give the report of the first walk: '2.11.79. From 13 H.P.G.S., Wimbledon, Combe Wood, Richmond to Hammersmith, 1.2.3.4.7.' This signifies that on November 2, 1879, Stephen, Pollock, Croom Robertson, James Cotter Morison and Douglas Freshfield started from Stephen's house—usually the meeting-place was some railway station—and took the route that is here indicated. When, shortly afterwards, I joined the society, I became No. 14 in the book, and the '1.2.14,' shows that on my first walk Stephen, Pollock and I were alone. I have special reason for remembering a certain wet Sunday, of which the record is as follows: '10.10.80. Harrow to London, 1.14.' I was the only tramp who had obeyed the writ of summons, which took the form of a post-card. When the 'guide' (we had no 'president,' certainly no chairman, only, so to speak, a 'preambulator') and his one follower arrived at Harrow Station, the weather was so bad that there was nothing for it but to walk back to London through drenching rain; but that day, faithful alone among the faithless found, I learnt something of Stephen, and now I bless the downpour which kept less virtuous men indoors.

The society was in being for fifteen years. Our rule was to walk on every other Sunday for about eight months in the year. The last walk, the 252nd, was taken in March 1895. In 1891, however, Stephen resigned the leadership, and we gave him a silver inkstand as a token of our affection. Pollock took his place, except during intervals when R. G. Marsden and Douglas Freshfield had charge of the flock. Stephen still came out occasionally, and his last tramp was not

accomplished until 1894; but already in 1888, 'Doctor puts me on short allowance,' was written in the chronicle. I regret to add that certain burglars took a fancy to the ink-stand.

First and last, the total number of names in the book was 60, together with one 'corresponding member,' Prof. Vinogradoff, then of Moscow; but at any one time there were not more than twenty effective members, and if ten actually appeared that was a good assembly. Stephen had once (though I say it who should not) a sole companion; I do not think that he ever was quite alone. On the other hand, twenty-two of us mustered to celebrate the hundredth walk, when our proceedings ended in a dinner at Box Hill. On divers occasions we were hospitably entertained by Charles Darwin, John Tyndall, Mr. George Meredith, Mr. Frederic Harrison, and some of our own members; but on principle Stephen objected to our being 'pampered,' as he would say, and generally bread and cheese at the village ale-house, or sandwiches, which we had been bidden to bring with us, were our fare. Our names will not be interesting to the public, but they will not fill much space if given in an appendix,[1] and the list may recall to some elderly gentlemen memories of a happy time and of their guide, philosopher and friend. If I added the names of all those who upon occasion have walked with Stephen on Sunday, a grander show might be made; but I have no desire that a respectable and liberal ministry should go down to posterity as 'All the Tramps.' The deceitfulness of golf and the vanity of bicycles distracted some of those who had been consistent walkers, and the animation of the society was at length suspended. Lately it has been resuscitated by those who, after the flesh and after the spirit, are the Sons of the Tramps. A greeting goes to them from the chronicler of ancestral exploits. *Beati omnes qui ambulant.*

The form of government was unlimited paternal despotism. Stephen would never have granted us a charter or have admitted that we knew the way. Mr. Sully has well said

[1] *See* Appendix II.

that when Stephen was collecting his flock at the railway station his face 'had something of the solicitous look of a schoolmaster.'[1] 'Come, I must sweep these creatures away!' —that was the manner in which a lady heard him speak of us in a house in which we were being entertained; and 'swept away' we were accordingly. Not that his rule was 'sanctioned' by any pains or penalties, except such as he could prove to be the natural and inevitable consequences of our disobedience and self-will. If we missed a train or had to break into a run, it was demonstrably our fault. Sometimes the proof seemed sophistical, and the boasted 'short-cut' a roundabout route, but really Stephen's power of scheming a long walk and making space and time subservient to his will was remarkable. Mr. Meredith is right, I think, in saying that he had in him something of the great military captain. He was a strategist, and those who tramped with him will best understand why every volume of the biographical dictionary appeared at the right moment.

As to the conversation, I cannot help thinking that the occasions on which the presence of a shorthand writer was desirable coincided somewhat exactly with those on which Mr. Meredith honoured us with his company; but it was all very pleasant. Of Stephen I should not say that he was a great talker or a brilliant talker; nor do I think that he had ever been either the one or the other. Dr. Morgan, who has a marvellous power of recalling the voices that he once heard, and who can imitate to perfection Stephen's impatient snort, represents him as a comparatively silent member of the 'set' in which he lived at Cambridge, though now and then there would be eloquent outbursts about the American war or the like. When I knew him he did not talk much. If conversation was general, as it would be in a railway-carriage filled with 'tramps,' he would say little. Now and again a few words muttered into the beard neatly summed the case, punctured the fallacy, or blew away the froth. Sometimes they were words of the sorts that are called sardonic, or saturnine, or I know not what; but then the eyes always suggested the

[1] *Atlantic Monthly*, March 1905, 351.

proper rate of discount. Occasionally it has been my lot to see Stephen with some brilliant talker : Lowell, for example, He was an admirable listener, keenly enjoying the game, and keeping the other man up to the mark by well placed strokes ; but his strokes were few. Fully to enjoy Stephen you had to be alone with him. Then if you did not ask too many questions—a catechist was to him of all bores the most abominable—he would chat of men and things, of books and journals, of poetry and prize-fighting, philosophy and pedestrianism, the virtues of guides and the sins of contributors : never dazzling, never epigrammatic, always terse and humorous, always full of good matter and sober sense. It was the talk of a man who had seen a great deal of human nature, who had strong likes and dislikes, but much equity and much compassion. But there ! Stephen would have been the first to say that he was no Johnson, and certainly he has found no Boswell. Nor by my fault will he lose so much as some men would. He never ' talked like a book ' ; not in the least ; yet those who read his books and letters will, I feel sure, know exactly what his talk was like, for he was homogeneous. Beneath the academic costume, somewhat carelessly worn, a sympathetic eye will easily detect the shooting-coat of the ' chief guide.' The testimony of M. Loppé, to whom Stephen always talked in French, is interesting. ' The wonderful lucidity of Stephen's mind, and his conversation, which was always interesting and full of original ideas,' recalled to M. Loppé the great English novelists of the eighteenth century with their humour and their good sense ; and, though all sorts of things were talked of, ' Stephen was always the same.' ' He never reminded you of any one but himself,' says Mr. Bryce.

Of the great Metaphysical Society, in which divines and men of science tilted, Stephen became a member in 1877. He read, I see, a paper on ' Belief and Evidence ' in that year, and another on the ' Uniformity of Nature ' in 1879. He soon ceased to attend the meetings, and what he says of them in his letters and in the ' Life ' of his brother is rather amusing than respectful. He did not greatly believe in the value of

these showy tournaments. He did not love argument for the sake of argument, and I do not think that he could shine in an impromptu debate with those whose opinions differed widely from his own. He was to be seen to greater advantage in a small group that contained no cardinal or 'eminent scientist.' Eight of the Tramps, calling themselves the Scratch Eight, used to dine together and talk philosophy.[1] Unfortunately it is the least philosophic member of the crew who here records its existence. A phrase from an essay on rowing, about 'delightful intimacies' formed in the process of 'talking nonsense and mistaking it for philosophy,' comes back to my mind at this inopportune moment. But it was good to hear a discussion between Stephen and Croom Robertson, or Edmund Gurney—I name the dead—and he would have said that he gained much thereby.

After his second marriage Cornwall became the scene of Stephen's summer holidays, and with Cornwall he fell in love. At the end of 1881 he bought the lease of a house at St. Ives, and there he went in thirteen successive years. A pleasant house it still is in the memory of his friends: 'a small but roomy house with a garden of an acre or two all up and down hill, with quaint little terraces divided by hedges of escalonia, a grape-house and kitchen-garden, and a so-called orchard beyond.' Stephen did much of his writing in the garden, and, when he raised his eyes from the paper, looked out over bright blue sea. Any one who cared to hunt for a critic's inconsistencies might, I fancy, prove by documentary evidence that three kinds of English scenery—that of the Cornish coast, that of the English lakes, and that of the Cambridgeshire fens—were severally and respectively 'second only' to the Alps. A dead-heat for second is possible, or a Cantabrigian 'bracket of three'; but in truth, Stephen was much inclined to like whatever he had got, and Cornwall suited him well. He could walk there unrestrainedly, and exercise his weird powers of devising ever new ways between point and point. And still was he terrible on one of his

[1] Edmund Gurney, Shadworth Hodgson, F. W. Maitland, F. Pollock, Carveth Read, G. C. Robertson, Leslie Stephen, James Sully

'going days.' At Easter 1884, with two much younger companions, he walked from Penzance to the Land's End—round the coast for the greater part of the way. The weather went from good to bad, from bad to worse. After a halt at the 'First and Last Inn,' Stephen made a 'bee-line' upon his house at St. Ives, and through the mist and blinding rain he stalked across the moors: stalked like fate. There was no swaying of shoulders or swinging of arms. The step looked short, but those who tried to keep by his side knew that it was long. That afternoon he was silent and grim and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, thoroughly happy. An occasional bout of serious walking was a physical, intellectual and moral necessity, and I know that, at least as a change, he liked a companion who often had nothing to say, and said it at great length. Yet dumber companions were cherished: Troy (alias Treu), then Sailor, then Rob, then Gurth. Without a dog Leslie Stephen is unthinkable. 'My poor old Rob poisoned': this is the one tragic entry in the placid chronicle of the Tramps. Few poems, I think, went straighter to Stephen's heart than 'Geist's Grave.'

In 1879 and 1881 he again saw the Alps in winter. How little of that paradise was then known in well-informed England may be gathered from the following story: In January 1879, M. Loppé at Interlaken happened to mention to one of his acquaintance that he with Stephen and another companion was going to Grindelwald, thence to Meiringen, and thence by the Brünig or the Susten Pass, or perhaps by the Grimsel. When at Meiringen they saw to their amusement that their projected passage of the Grimsel was announced in an Interlaken newspaper. They laughed much over 'ce fait divers,' says M. Loppé, but little thought how far it would fly. When Stephen returned to England, he found that it had flown by telegraph into the columns of the *Times*. 'Happily,' wrote Stephen, in French, 'my wife did not read it; but my mother-in-law did, and she telegraphed to Interlaken imploring me not to attempt the perilous ascent of the Grimsel! Everywhere I meet friends who ask me whether I have not done excessively dangerous things, since

the *Times* has talked of them. Vraiment cela a eu beaucoup de succès!' I need hardly transcribe M. Loppé's comment. 'Le passage du Grimsel est assez fréquenté par les gens du Haut-Valais et de l'Oberhasli en hiver et il est assez facile.' The ascent of the Titlis was the real feat of this year: M. Loppé has spoken of it above.[1] Much else in his piety has he written to me of those winter excursions. Of a visit to Mürren in 1881, he says this: 'Après une demi-heure de descente, nous laissons là-haut la réalité plus belle que les plus beaux rêves pour pénétrer dans le brouillard.' Better than any other man can the painter interpret Stephen's love of the mountains; but regretfully we must allow our mountaineer to descend into the dense mist of 'dictionary and drudgery.' He left the Alps unseen until 1887 (that was the great mistake of his life), and in the meantime did and suffered much.

Of the Dictionary of National Biography, its plan, its size, its merits and defects very little will be said in this place. The statistics are easily ascertained[2]: 63 volumes containing 29,108 pages were punctually delivered, the first volume on January 1, 1885, the last at Midsummer, 1900; and 29,120 articles were written by 653 contributors. Without any fear of contradiction we may affirm that a noble plan was well executed. An able French historian, trained in a severe school, has lately said: 'Ni notre *Biographie universelle*, ni notre *Biographie générale*, ni les articles fort inégaux de notre *Grande Encyclopédie* ne peuvent être comparés à ce monument d'érudition généralement très sûre.'[3] There is no need, however, to collect testimonials, and it is not of the completed work, but of its first editor that we have here to speak

Stephen himself would be the first to blame me if he were exalted at the expense of his principal assistant and successor. I fancy that even before Mr. Lee's name appeared upon the title-page (namely, in March 1890) he was in some respects a better editor than Stephen, and I know well that for two or three years previously his services had been indispensable.

[1] *See* above, p. 99. [2] *See* the Statistical Account prefixed to vol. lxiii.
[3] Ch. Petit-Dutaillis, 'Revue de Synthèse historique,' 1904, p. 360.

Still Mr. Lee would not forgive me if I did not remind the public that he was born in 1859, whereas Stephen was born in 1832, and had been writing books for well nigh twenty years when Mr. Lee was fresh from Oxford. Moreover, it cannot be said that Stephen had the good luck to light on Mr. Lee. In March 1883 his good judgment chose Mr. Lee after for some months he had been weighing the claims of other men. The general deserves some credit if he selects as chief of the staff one who has never yet set army in the field, but who carries out the campaign to a victorious close. Likewise it is to be had in mind that since 1882 historical study of all sorts and kinds has made rapid progress in this country. Even if the Dictionary had not been published, it would be far easier now to compile a similar and a better work than it then was to start the Dictionary. It was an unorganised world to which Stephen issued his first circulars. Nowadays the learned editor of the *Historical Review* could probably make at short notice a list of specialists to whom most of the great articles should be committed, and high among those specialists would stand men who had published little or nothing before they wrote for the Dictionary. Moreover, nowadays much information about promising young men could rapidly be obtained at Oxford, Cambridge, and other seats of learning. But in 1882 there was no *Historical Review*, and the universities were but beginning to take seriously the claims of modern history, though I must add that the Oxford school provided Stephen with a brilliant band of young researchers, who became in course of time the old guard of his army. When the history of British historiography is written, Stephen will deserve a high place among the organisers. He knew that he would have to proceed empirically. *Solvitur ambulando*—the motto of the philosophic tramp—had also to be the motto of the editor. He knew that he would start with a 'scratch eight,' and must 'weed out the impostors.' He knew also that he must in course of time shuffle off some of the ornamental people whose names would at first attract subscribers, and that an always larger part of the work must be done by those who were trained in the Dictionary, by the Dictionary,

for the Dictionary. He was a good judge of men, and just as he 'made' the Trinity Hall boat that 'went head,' though he was a poor oarsman, so I believe that he would have 'made' a good historical crew even had he been a poor historian.

But that he was not. He knew vastly more history in 1900 than he did in 1882, and in the meanwhile he had tasted for the first time the pleasure of hunting the elusive fact. However, in 1882 he was well seen in modern British history. He knew it from Milton and Hobbes to Tennyson and Carlyle, rather than from Charles II. to Victoria: let that be allowed; but I think that he would have made a highly creditable show if examined in the politics—even the party politics—of the eighteenth century, and I doubt there were very many men in England who so well understood 'the lie of the country': in other words, who knew the general outline of more of the lives that would have to be written. His letters contain many an amusing outburst against 'antiquaries.' In the mouth of some students of history the term 'antiquary,' if I mistake not, often signifies any one who knows any period earlier than 'my own,' and, if the term be properly fortified, it may stand for any one who knows 'my period' more intimately than I do. Stephen sometimes allowed himself this use of words, and 'antiquaries' covered some great men whom he soon learnt to admire. A little bias against antiquarianism and what he called the diffusion of useless knowledge was no undesirable quality in the editor when he first turned to his task. He had hardly done so before, so he wrote at the time, he was offered a list of 1400 hymn-writers. Some of the denunciations of 'antiquaries' were occasioned by the mighty Freeman. Stephen in his last days told the story in a delightfully careless way.[1] 'He wrote a life of Alfred . . . but declined to do more because we had a difference of opinion as to whether Athelstane should be spelt with an A. That was, I confess, a question to which I was culpably indifferent; but I had taken competent advice, and my system (I forget what it was!) had been sanctioned by the great historian Stubbs.' Freeman, it need hardly be said, contended for

[1] 'Some Early Impressions,' *National Review*, Nov. 1903, p. 428.

Æthel, and, if I remember rightly, Stephen was glad to find sufficient authority for *Athelstan* and *Ethelbert*, because he did not desire to thrust into the forefront of his first volume—his shop-window, so to speak—a large number of *Æthels* who, even in Freeman's hands, would be much deader than Queen Anne, with whom the first volume ends. Very base, no doubt, are such thoughts of shop-windows, and, I fear that Stephen was more anxious to obtain Freeman's 'Ælfred' for the first volume than to keep Freeman's name on his list, for this great 'antiquary,' with all his many merits, did not run well in harness. On the other hand, the editor was able to secure and retain the services of some eminent historians who were admirable contributors. I may mention, as they are no longer with us, Gardiner and Creighton. Gardiner he greatly revered and in some sort envied; and here is a note written to George Smith in 1892: 'I shall be delighted to propose the health of a bishop: it will be quite a new sensation!' This may lead to the remark that from the first Stephen had tried to secure not only competence but broad-minded tolerance and sympathy, especially in religious matters. High-churchmen were to be allotted to high-churchmen, and so on, if, as would usually be the case, a reasonable degree of competence could be found in sympathetic quarters. In this respect the Dictionary may fairly claim to be national. You mean, I hear Stephen adding, that it reflects the confusion of the national mind. To which the reply is that it might have done worse.

Some of the groans over 'antiquaries' that will be heard hereafter were due to an event which taught Stephen a sharp lesson. The first volume was already 'in page' when it came to his knowledge that the Dictionary might be greeted at its birth by an injunction to restrain a breach of copyright. Nor was this the only cause of offence that could be found in the work of a trusted contributor when once suspicion was aroused.[1] And the worst of it was that Stephen did not make the discovery; the news of it came from Mr. Lee. Stephen, I see, wrote a remorseful letter to George Smith:

[1] *See* 'Some Early Impressions,' *National Review*, Dec. 1903, p 570.

'I can't say how much it vexes me to get you into a fix when you have trusted me so generously.' A minute examination of the aforesaid contributor's work became necessary. It was not, I think, a misfortune for the Dictionary that its editor should have a sharp lesson of this kind at an early moment; but it pained Stephen deeply. This may introduce a word touching the relation between him and Mr. George Smith. The publisher was for near forty years one of his best friends, and in public and private Stephen spoke of Smith in terms of warm affection. I do not think that he said a word too much, but a little should be said of the other side of the relationship. If Smith showed generosity and chivalry and delicacy, so did Stephen. During those first years of the Dictionary he would not ask for all the help that he sorely needed. It would be untrue to say that he had been sanguine. On the contrary, he thought it highly probable that the projected work would never get beyond the letter C. What he was not prepared for was just that measure of success and failure which was achieved. To put it briefly, the public-spirited publisher was content to lose much more money than Stephen thought he would be content to lose. That being so, Stephen held his tongue and worked harder and harder. He did not, it is true, put his whole soul into the Dictionary. Just when the first volume was to appear, there came the call to write a life of Fawcett, and Stephen would not have been Stephen if he had not felt that the call was imperious. But he worked double shifts, and would allow no word to be said to Smith of the strain that he endured. I would not exaggerate the amount of the work that he did, and perhaps a more phlegmatic man could have done it without collapsing; but Stephen was not phlegmatic, and the task of training his crew was exasperating. There were good oarsmen in his boat, but at first the rowing was very 'ragged.' It says something of certain qualities of his that distinguished men submitted to his discipline. He announced in a circular that he must be an autocrat, but hoped to be a considerate autocrat. Were it possible to reproduce the letters to contributors that he wrote by the score, they would bear witness

to considerateness and sanity and that perfect probity which inspires confidence; and even a contributor in a rage could never call him pedant.

It is easy to say now that there ought to have been a little more of that quality of which pedantry is the excess; but it is not, I think, very clear that in that case the Dictionary would have been steered beyond the rocks and shallows of a dangerous coast into the high seas. Stephen had to think of punctual delivery; he had also to think of reviewers who would not be deeply erudite 'antiquaries'; he had to make his 'show articles' palateable as well as nutritious; and also he had to manage contributors who were not accustomed to being managed. The liberty that he allowed to real researchers was, I know, highly valued by some men who were young when they became contributors, but are famous now. Professor Firth, to whom Cromwell was allotted in 1888, has told me of the pleasure of working for one who would not lightly interfere. 'When he was satisfied with an article, he was very appreciative and very encouraging, so that the desire to earn his approval became one of the causes of the production of good articles.' Professor Tout, who laboured in a field far remote from Stephen's interests, has written to me in the same spirit. 'I am glad to be able to testify to the debt which I owe to Leslie Stephen. Like many Oxford men of my generation, I approached historical investigation without the least training or guidance in historical method, and felt very much at a loss how to set to work. The careful and stringent regulations which he drew up, and the brusque but kindly way in which he enforced obedience to them, constituted for many of us our first training in anything like original investigation. At first we found him critical and exacting, but as soon as we had gained his confidence he gave us absolute liberty within the limits of his scheme, and, while insisting on brevity, scholarship, punctuality and businesslike precision, he never worried his contributors by fussy insistence on trivialities, but let each of them go his own way.' Stephen was no medievalist; but I doubt whether the establishment of an École des Chartes in England would have done for

medieval history more than was done by the good sense, the eye for men, and the 'brusque but kindly way' of our chief guide.

And Stephen set the stroke. A good critic and a learned historian, Dr. A. W. Ward, has said that 'there have been, at least in dictionaries, few styles more pregnant than Stephen's, and few that, while at no time harsh or severe, could so well afford to dispense with "flowers."'[1] For myself I do not like to speak of this point for I am partial. Stephen's dictionary-style is Stephen's very self on one of his 'going days': making a bee-line across country, with no ounce of flesh to spare, and with that terrible step which looked so short and was so long. It is, I own, questionable whether a biographical dictionary was the proper place for as much in the nature of literary criticism as was admitted, and I can well understand that some of the phrases that most vividly recall Stephen's talk are stones of stumbling to earnest students:—this, for example, in the life of Hume: 'perhaps it is more likely that the old lady lied.' Robert Owen 'may be described as one of those intolerable bores who are the salt of the earth.' Dugald Stewart 'is too much a professor of philosophical deportment.' Certainly Leslie Stephen was not a professor of biographical deportment, and some strong stomachs might like the Dictionary better without the pinch of salt. To say that Tito was one of George Eliot's 'finest feminine characters,' was unkind, not perhaps to the illustrious authoress, but to the reviewer who remarked that 'Of course Tito Melema is a man, not a woman; no doubt Romola herself is meant.' A dictionary should not be strewn with such man-traps for pedestrians.

But I fall back on the judgment of a less biassed judge. In the editor's articles, says Dr. Ward, lies much of the strength of the Dictionary, and much of its savour, and 'it is impossible so much as to imagine the Dictionary without them.' It is a long gallery. Starting at the Restoration or thereabouts, Stephen drew in black and white more than half of the greatest men of letters, and much more than half of the

[1] *Manchester Guardian*, Feb. 23, 1904.

great speculative thinkers. He gave us Milton, Dryden, Congreve, Pope, Gray, Cowper, Byron, Coleridge, and Wordsworth; Addison, Bolingbroke, Swift, Johnson, Boswell, Gibbon, De Quincey, Landor, Macaulay, Hallam, and Carlyle; Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, Scott, Dickens, and Thackeray; Jane Austen, Fanny Burney, the Brontës and George Eliot; Hobbes, Locke, Butler, Berkeley, Hume, Hartley, Adam Smith, Reid, Hamilton, the Mills, Malthus, Ricardo, Green, Sidgwick, Clifford, and Croom Robertson; Warburton also and Law; Paley, Whewell, Mansel, and Maurice. One soldier of renown, Churchill (John, first Duke of Marlborough), and the Francis who was or was not Junius, were thrown into the bargain, because Stephen in his loyalty thought that he was not doing work enough for his pay, and, by the way, he became much interested in the Junian controversy, and would talk of it by the hour while protesting that it was too trivial to occupy any rational mind for five minutes.[1] But, further, it might fairly be said of him that he taught a large number of people how lives should be written in a dictionary. Before the end there were men who could write the lean, terse style almost if not quite as well as Stephen. But there had been much hewing and stewing of articles before a model was established. 'He had no mercy for pursy followers,' says Mr. Meredith. This saying would hardly have gained the assent of the accomplished editor of the *Athenæum*, Norman MacColl, a persistent and cheerful, but not a meagre, 'tramp,' for, unless Mr. Meredith had detained us beyond the appointed moment, the chief guide was merciful to the portliest of the flock. And so, acting in another capacity, I believe that he was ever courteous and considerate to the portliest of his contributors, even when he was most strenuously insisting that girth must be reduced and fat replaced by muscle. In course of time the stroke was caught. Many could raise the flower. A school had been established. Portraiture in black and white had become a well-known kind of art. Meanwhile the master had almost killed himself, for he was not phlegmatic, and he was loyal.

[1] Stephen wrote of this matter in *Eng. Hist. Rev.* iii. 233.

XVIII

THE STRUGGLE WITH THE DICTIONARY

(1882—1891)

After what has been said, the following extracts from letters will not require a long preface. By Christmas 1882, the Dictionary was on the stocks, but two years were to elapse before the first volume saw the light. In 1883 a Lectureship at Trinity College, Cambridge, having been founded out of money bequeathed by W. G. Clark, Stephen became a candidate and was successful. He was persuaded to take this step by Fawcett and some other friends, who hoped that in some way or another a more permanent place would be found for him at Cambridge. Stephen was proud to be chosen as the first of the Clark lecturers on English literature. He had been more successful than he had hoped to be when in 1864 he tore himself from Cambridge, and diffidently turned to journalism. In 1883 he feared, so I see, that even if he were otherwise acceptable to the electors, his heterodoxy would stand in his way. But much had happened since his exodus.[1] As will be seen in some characteristic letters, he held the office for only one of the three years for which he had been appointed. His lectures were given in the Lent term of 1884; he would not print them. He was discovering that the Dictionary was a far heavier weight than the *Cornhill*, and before the end of the year another piece of work fell in his way.

Henry Fawcett died on November 6. On that day week Stephen, in answer to an application by Mr. Morley, who was

[1] W. G. Clark, it may be noted, is the 'distinguished resident at Cambridge,' mentioned, but not named, on the first page of the 'Essays on Free-thinking.'

editing *Macmillan's*, said that he was already writing down his personal recollections for some future use not precisely determined, and at the same time sent off a short but warmly affectionate article, which appeared in due course.[1] On the 25th he received a request from Mrs. Fawcett. He replied: 'Your letter has reached me this moment. I am forced to go out and write not to lose a post. At present I have only time to say that I shall be proud and happy to accept the task that you offer me. It touches me that you should have thought of me. I will write fully to-morrow.' He wrote very fully on the morrow, having already conceived his book, adding 'A man would be cold-hearted indeed who did not feel it a privilege to be asked to do anything in honour of such a friend as I have lost.' On the 28th, his birthday, he wrote again, and the last words of his letter were these: 'This is the saddest of anniversaries for me. This day, nine years ago, all life seemed to be crushed out for me. After such a calamity as I then suffered, life can never be what it was. I have gained happiness again; but—you will not misunderstand me—it cannot be of the old confident and unqualified kind. It is sobered and quieted, and I have never had the heart to join much in society since. Yet the memories of old days have become a consolation and encouragement, and I hope that in time you may have something of the same experience.'

The book was rapidly written, especially what, as all agree, is its best part—the part about Cambridge. A short dialogue, which Stephen's sister has repeated to me, I must give, for it displays one of her brother's failings: 'And now I've got to write a life of Fawcett.'—'Well, happily there need be no hurry about that'—'You *might* know me better by this time, Milly! Don't you know that I'm like a hoop? When I'm not going at full speed I drop.' And on he went at racing speed, writing what is often thought the most attractive of his books. It was soon in its fifth edition. At the same time, the Dictionary was tormenting him. He took no holiday in 1885, and, as every physician who looked at him knew, he was a man who

[1] *Macmillan's*, Dec. 1884.

needed many holidays. He never, I think, recovered the strain of that year. Then a book on the Utilitarians at once began to 'simmer' in his mind, and he was refreshing his dictionary-ridden brain by the study of Green's philosophy.

From among the countless letters that he wrote to contributors about their work only a couple will be given. They are enough to suggest what he had to do and how he did it. One effect of the Dictionary becomes painfully obvious. Stephen's handwriting rapidly deteriorated. He tried hard to keep down office expenses. Mr. Lee tells me that Stephen himself, until his health gave way, did all the work that had to be done in the curtailment of the contributor's articles, making the changes with his own hand upon the manuscript, 'often groaning terribly the while over the superfluous verbiage, bad handwriting, and uncongenial attitude of mind of the writers. Proof-correcting, which was my main function, was always trying to him.' As to the letters to Mr. Norton, they flow in an unbroken stream. Many of them, as might be expected, refer to the Froude-Carlyle embroilment. Stephen was in a difficult position. He would not entrust Carlyle's life to any hand but his own, and he was hearing in private both sides of the story. I believe that before his death he had published all that he wanted to publish about this wearisome affair, so I shall quote but two or three sentences.[1] Froude alternately attracted and repelled him, and, even in his last days, he would sometimes return to Froude as to an unsolved problem.

Dec. 25, 1882.

To Mr. Norton.

It is long since I have written to you, and I find it hard even now to squeeze out a Christmas letter. I have written more letters in the last six weeks or so than I ever wrote in the same time before. I have given up the *Cornhill*, and taken to a biographical dictionary, which will last me

[1] *See* the life of Carlyle in the Dictionary; the essay on 'Carlyle's Ethics' in 'Hours in a Library,' vol. iii., and the essay on Froude in 'Studies of a Biographer,' vol. iii.

the rest of my life—if, that is, it succeeds in living at all. It is of British names exclusively, but I find that there are 900 A's to begin with, and God knows how many more We shall come out in volumes, four in a year, it is proposed, and, if we get it done in 50 [volumes] I shall be surprised. It gives me a deal of work at starting; but will, I trust, run more smoothly in the grooves a year or two hence. . . .

To me he [Froude] remains an enigma of which I never get the solution, though sometimes I seem half to see it. I should like to take a long vacation to full investigation; but I fancy that I should find myself outside at the end of it. . . .

My best news will be stale by the time you get this, viz., that my old friend Fawcett has apparently beaten his fever and diphtheria, and is getting well. To have lost him would have been very painful to me, for he is one of the friends who stick. . . .

March 4, 1883.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I am to a certain extent emerging from the stress of dictionary work, and I have a spare bit of time to write a brief reminder of my existence. The said dictionary is more or less launched, and, like other work, so far as my experience has gone, it is rather a humbug: that is, one talks a great 'deal and lets other people talk more about the immensity of the task, and, after all, one finds it to be tolerably simple when it is once got a little into order. I have now, at any rate, time enough to attend to other things, which with me means chiefly worrying away at some little metaphysical puzzles and so forth. . . .

I have not yet seen your volume of Emerson and Carlyle.[1] The prospect of seeing it made me think of Emerson and I have been reading him a good deal up and down lately—and with some good results. In certain ways he is not very congenial to me, but I feel a kind of friendly feeling, and moreover, an admiring feeling, grow upon me. I am too

[1] 'Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson,' ed. C. E. Norton, 1883.

old to set up an idol, and I doubt whether he is exactly the object of worship that I should ever have selected; but I can perceive more than I used to do how he should have been revered by some worshippers. . . .

I am rather melancholy just now. All our most promising men seem so fragile. [F. M.] Balfour was a cruel loss last year, and [T. H.] Green, though a Hegelian, was a man of power; and now poor [J. R.] Green, the historian, is dying, and Henry Smith is just dead, and I have been sitting this afternoon with Croom Robertson, one of the men I like best, who is quite prostrate with an attack of stone. . . .

. . . *March* 11, 1883.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I have read them [your volumes on Emerson and Carlyle] through with intense interest. . . . I don't know that the letters tell one anything positively new of Carlyle. Indeed, I don't see how any letters now can. He is more and more amazing to me; and I see how little I really knew him even when I was in the habit of seeing him. Emerson touches him off admirably in some of the letters. The power of the man astonishes me more and more. Nobody, I think could ever put so much character in every sentence; and, spite of all mannerisms and repetitions, he always reminds me of his favourite Ram Dass, who had fire enough in his belly to burn up the sins of the world. It seems to me as if he had fuel enough to keep a dozen human steam-engines going: enough to have driven him mad, if he had not had a tough Scotch constitution to work upon. It is pleasant, too, in these volumes to see that the real affectionateness of the man comes out. And the contrast with Emerson is curious and interesting. It seemed to me, though perhaps it was fancy, that Emerson in the early letters was sometimes a little catching Carlyle's style, and that he gradually shakes himself free and gets upon his own legs; but this might disappear on another reading. At present, I feel that if I want to get drunk

intellectually, I have only to take a drink of Carlyle. But too much at once becomes a little trying. Yet he fascinates me like nobody else.

I am rather in a rage just now over our 'blasphemous libels,' and with X for an excessive regard for decency; but I can say no more at present.[1]

To Mr. James Sully.

. . . *March* 12, 1883. If anything takes a practicable shape I should be delighted to join, but I am too much outside of these political agitations to be able to start anything myself. Of course, too, we must take care to make it plain that we do not defend coarse insults, though we do object to disproportionate punishment. . . . I can only say at present that I will join in any reasonable memorial, but am unable to get one up. . . . (*April* 9.) I could not sign a memorial unless it expressly disavowed sympathy with the brutality of the insults, and admitted that insults to any creed should be restrainable by proper regulations. If such a memorial were got up, I would willingly protest against the partiality of the law, and the excessive severity of the sentence. . . . (*April* 22.) I have signed your memorial, and sent it on to Y. . . . I am very glad to sign it myself, and should not feel my conscience easy without doing so. . . . I hope you will get Sidgwick. . . . (*May* 5.) . . . I am glad to hear of Llewelyn Davies. . . .

St. Ives, *Aug.* 5, 1883

To G. Croom Robertson.

. . . I am in that state of indolence which comes over me in our retirements. I make a dozen excuses before doing anything, and then do it as perfunctorily as I can. Reading MS. lives is my chief occupation of a serious kind, and that is stupid enough. The infernal Dictionary must

[1] Mr. G. W. Foote had lately been tried for blasphemous libel and sentenced to a year's imprisonment. *See* 'Life of Charles Bradlaugh,' by his daughter, ii. 325-334. The following extracts relate to an ineffectual petition for mitigation of the sentence, which petition was promoted by Prof. Sully. A long letter by Stephen appeared in the *Pall Mall* of March 8.

be kept going, though I begin to long for the day when it will appear, and have its fate decided one way or other. The antiquarian is a more troublesome creature to tackle in some respects than the average contributor to a magazine. He is not so humble. He thinks me an inferior animal because I don't care for the obscurest sweepings of minute information and treats me from a pinnacle of moral complacency. I don't know that he is worse than a poet, but he is nearly as bad. I have not, however, very much to do, and have brought down a little light reading: Green's 'Prolegomena' *inter alia*. . . . I shall extend my knowledge of the labyrinth of foot-paths about which I moon, and keep my brain at work just enough to manage my legs and no more. A girl, who was here the other day, made me write my name in a birthday-book, and it was marked by the appropriate text, 'His feet are at least as good as his head.' There could not be a better motto for me at present.

Oct. 5, 1883.

To G. Croom Robertson.

. . . On November 11 I am to go to Cambridge to elect (I suppose) Henry Sidgwick,[1] and I shall have the honour of staying with the Vice-Chancellor, in whom I feel awestruck to recognise a contemporary. It makes me feel older than words can convey that I should be on such a level. I have found time to finish Green's book. It makes me like the man very heartily, and much better than I did before. I confess that I cannot think him clear-headed; but I am rather surprised and pleased to find how much I agree with a good many of his views, allowing for the dialect.

Dec. 25, 1883.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I have been keeping my Christmas patriarchally

[1] To the professorship of moral philosophy. Stephen was a member of a board of electors.

with eight children round me—how strange it seems! . . . We have seen Lowell several times lately in the intervals of his absorption amongst ministers of state and great lords and ladies. I wonder whether he will ever get back to Elmwood and subside into his study, where he was when I first saw him and admired him as the ideal recluse student. His popularity here is immense, and we at least shall be very sorry to lose him. He will go back in any case a good Yankee, for all the waters of Damascus will not wash that out of him. . . . I was weak enough to undertake to add lecturing at Cambridge to my burden, and shall go and tell the lads that Addison wrote the *Spectator*, and had a quarrel with Pope, and that the heroic couplet was popular in those days, and bestow other new and valuable information. Really, I feel ashamed of it. I begin to think that enough has been said about all these things, and don't much want to go on grinding the dreary old critical mill. However, it does not much matter, and in a year or two, if all goes well, I shall be comparatively free and write another bit of ethics or something of the sort, which amuses me and does no particular harm to anybody.

Jan. 22, 1884.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . My own feelings about Arnold are mixed. When I read his lecturings—his 'We' and his bits of catchwords—morality = three-fourths of life, and so on—it sets my teeth on edge and makes me revolt. But I seriously hold him to be a very good poet, and to be substantially a simple-minded, well-meaning person. . . .

And as if this [dictionary] were not enough, I have been idiot and dolt enough to accept a lectureship at Cambridge. I had not sufficiently counted the cost, or rather I let myself be over-persuaded. I shall have to go to Cambridge three times a week to talk twaddle about Addison and Pope to a number of young ladies from Girton and a few idle undergraduates and the youthful prince, and feel down to the soles of my shoes that I am making an ass of myself. I

don't know why it never struck me before, but it has suddenly become evident to me that literary criticism is not my proper line. I stumbled into it somehow, and have never become acclimatised. I feel that I am out of my element in this kind of work, and, when I have made my bow and earned my wages, I shall shake off the dust off my shoes and find more congenial occupation in writing a book which is dimly shaping itself in my mind.[1] It will probably come to little enough; but at least it will let me talk my own dialect and not be a-mouthing of effete criticism. It strikes me as superlatively absurd to go on talking about the reign of Queen Anne, and seven weeks hence I hope to have shot my last bolt in that direction. . . . The Dictionary will be another weight until October, when we begin, I hope, to publish. . . .

April 12, 1884.

To Dr. Norman Moore.

My dear Sir,[2]—. . . I am much obliged by your suggestion about Brougham. I must admit that my prepossessions are strongly against Brougham. But this would count for nothing if I could obtain a life by so competent and well informed a writer as Mr. Elwin. Indeed, I prefer to have all lives written by persons who sympathise with the subjects, whatever my personal feeling may be. There is, however, another difficulty, which I will tell you frankly. I wrote a review of Mr. Elwin's 'Pope,'[3] in which I expressed a very unfavourable opinion of the comments upon Pope's poetry. I argued that some of the commentary was altogether irrelevant, and some of it mistaken in a critical sense. Now I do not know whether Mr. Elwin ever took the trouble to read what I had written, or, if he read it, whether he was annoyed by it or thought it unfair or malevolent. If, however, he was annoyed I certainly

[1] The Utilitarians.

[2] Dr. Norman Moore became an intimate friend, and his many contributions to the Dictionary were highly valued.

[3] 'Hours in a Library,' ser. 1. This essay was omitted from the revised edition published in 1892.

should have no right to be surprised; and, as I never had any other relations to him, he might very well think it impertinent in me first to attack him and then to ask for his help.

So far as I am concerned I should have no feeling against Mr. Elwin whatever. On the contrary, I have never heard anything about him personally that did not tend to increase my respect for him. Though I attacked his commentaries, I could not, of course, be blind to many of the great merits of his edition. Yet after speaking as I did, I could hardly write to him without some reference to this, which it would be difficult to make, inasmuch as I could not withdraw the substance of my remarks. I am sorry if the expression was unbecoming; but I have not looked at them for years, and know nothing about that.

You see therefore that some diplomacy might be needed.

To Mr. Norton.

22 Hyde Park Gate,[1] *April* 13, 1884.

. . . The Cambridge lectures were in a sense a success; that is, I had a large class, limited chiefly by the badness of the room, consisting chiefly of young women from the ladies' colleges. The female student is at present an innocent animal, who wants to improve her mind and takes ornamental lectures seriously, not understanding with her brother students that the object of study is to get a good place in an examination, and that lectures are a vanity and a distraction. I confess that I sympathise with the male and grow half-inclined to laugh in the faces of my respectful and intelligent hearers. Moreover, I felt keenly the absurdity of the weary old criticisms upon Pope and Addison, and wondered increasingly that any one should care to hear me read articles which I should regard as too trite for a magazine. They could have got it up in half the time in two or three books. Is not printing an old invention already? So though my reception both from the young women and from some old friends and stray dons was

[1] The house had lately received a new name.

pleasant enough, I felt myself to be a humbug, and moreover going to Cambridge and back for each lecture was a bore, and finally I have too much to do. So I have written to resign my lectureship. . . .

I shall now be very hard at work at producing the first volume of the Dictionary. . . . My greatest worry is in struggling against the insane verbosity of the average contributor. I never knew before how many words might be used to express a given fact. I read piles of MS., cutting right and left, and reducing some 'copy' to a third of its original mass. I speak within bounds. Till I get out a volume, which will, I hope, be in October, I shall hardly be able to look round. . . .

Oct. 16 *or* 26, 1884.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I have just received a denunciation of the wicked determinists from William James, who is a clever fellow, but, I think, rather flighty. I stick to Spinoza and Jonathan Edwards and Hume and all really clear-headed people. I have just come back from the Land's End. . . . I gained strength enough to try another fall with the Dictionary—a metaphor naturally suggested by a sight of Cornish wrestling. I have, by the way, had only too much reason to use the phrase. The Dictionary has given me an awkward tumble. An accursed Doctor of Divinity, one X. (his D. Dship gives an extra flavour to my execrations) has been cheating me.[1] . . . Meanwhile as I had weakly trusted a good deal of work to him, I shall have to do an amount of correction and excision which I tremble to think of. Our first volume has been delayed by this clerical scoundrel, but we shall come out with the new year. . . . I have still a sort of idle fancy that I should be better employed in writing than in drudgery of this wearisome kind. But there is much to be said on the other side; and the Dictionary, if it thrives, will be a more useful bit of work than any books of mine are likely to be. . . .

[1] *See* above, p. 368.

St. Ives, *July* 25, 1884.

To Mrs. W. K. Clifford.

You asserted in your last note to Julia that I never wrote to you; in which there is some truth. So long as I am a dictionary-ridden animal I write to no one till I am free. And I am now free for three or four days, and show my natural disposition by immediately blossoming into correspondence. I have, however, only one thing really to say.

We are here on a lovely blowing breezy day: the air is delicious—pure Atlantic breezes—not a germ in a cubic mile of it; you could not catch a disease without breaking all the laws of nature and confuting Tyndall—my love to him if he is your neighbour—and it is as soft as silk; it has a fresh sweet taste like new milk; and it is so clear that we see thirty miles of coast as plainly as we see the back of Queen's Gate from our drawing-room window in London. We have a little garden, which is not much to boast of; and yet it is a dozen little gardens each full of romance for the children—lawns surrounded by flowering hedges, and intricate thickets of gooseberries and currants, and remote nooks of potatoes and peas, and high banks, down which you can slide in a sitting posture, and corners in which you come upon unexpected puppies—altogether a pocket-paradise with a sheltered cove of sand in easy reach (for 'Ginia even) just below. Also there is a railway station between us and the said cove. From all which and more the inference to my single assertion is obvious: to wit, that you must come here when we go (or rather before we go), and take up your abode with Ethel and Alice. Seriously I feel that it is a sin to leave the place to itself for so long a time as our absence, and it would be an unadulterated pleasure to think of you and your little ones getting some good out of it. It *is* rather solitary and rather far off, and, I fear, it is not quite equal in some respects to Alassio; but for England I don't think it is easily beaten. The effect is at present to make me so sleepy and lazy that I am exhausted even by writing this.

Everybody sends their love and says ditto to me.

Sept. 4, 1884.

To Mrs. W. K. Clifford.

It was kind of you to write to me; and I should be a brute not to acknowledge your kindness, though you can't expect to hear much from the poor drudge who has come up to give a little shove to his mill. . . .

The feminine mind has every merit; but is haunted by a strange illusion that men overwork themselves. I have never in my life worked hard, except when I was taking my degree; and I grow steadily lazier as I grow older. The only reason why I ever get anything done is that I do not waste time in the vain effort to make myself agreeable. I stay in my shell and do a little bit of work most days; but I take even too much care of my precious health. All of which I could prove by facts and figures, but you did not come to dinner, and it is too long to write it all out. . . .

Nov. 19, 1884.

To Mrs. W. K. Clifford *at St. Ives.*

Julia reports you as saying that you want to know more about walks at St. Ives. I am afraid that walks within reach of Ethel and Alice cannot be very much varied. However, as Julia has gone out to a concert, I will write down a list of possible variations, such as I can remember. It may possibly suggest something. [Instructions for various walks.]

I wish that I could come down and act as guide for a day or two. But I hardly see my way to it. That damned Dictionary is about my bed and about my path and spies out all my ways, as the psalmist puts it; or, to be less metaphorical, I am so pestered with various bits of business connected therewith that I do not feel free to take a run. And in January we shall be publishing, and I shall be starting a new system. so that double attention will be required. . . .

You were sorry, I know, for dear old Fawcett's death. It has been very painful to me. He was the staunchest and kindest friend I have ever had. I feel a more selfish

regret, because so long as he was alive I had not lost all grip of the old college days. Now there is a great gap; and it seems, strangely enough, as if he must have died years ago; I suppose because I associate him so much with a distant and very happy time, and a time when few of my present ties were in existence. You, for example, were hardly born when Fawcett and I were most intimate and already giving ourselves the airs of full-blown dons. As Bewick says, 'Good Times and Bad Times and All Times get over'—which is perhaps a comfort. Moral: I must set to work to-night, having, however, refreshed myself by talking to you and getting an imaginary breath of St. Ives lanes.

Julia does not send her love because she isn't here. I send mine to Ethel and Alice, and I will write to Ethel when I get a letter from her. Ladies ought to begin.

Dec. 13, 1884.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . Said Dictionary is reaching the critical stage of first appearance. If it thrives commercially, I can answer for two things: first, that it shall come out regularly and be finished with a finite time; secondly, that I will get more help, and therefore escape the drudgery which I now endure. But if it languishes, I cannot tell what may happen. I have another occupation now of more interest to me personally. I don't know whether you knew what an intimate friendship I had with Fawcett. Since he was in Parliament I have seen him less frequently, but he was not less cordial than of old. His family have asked me to write a memoir; and I have of course agreed. At present I am only in the stage of collecting materials. They will, I think, be abundant; but I mean to make the book a short one. Carlyle's 'Sterling' will be my model. Really what I have to do is to give the most faithful portrait I can of my old friend. He was a very noble and very simple fellow, without a particle of humbug in him, and in some ways therefore, the task is not difficult. . . .

April 5, 1885.

To Mr. John Morley.

When I think of you I feel something like certain men of Galilee. You have soared into a political empyrean, whilst I am knee-deep in dictionary and drudgery. I could often howl like Carlyle over Dryasdust, and perhaps I should, if I could howl as loudly, and if I had not misgivings that work of this kind is the best that I am fit for. However, I want to have at least one sight of you for a talk about Fawcett. I have written a good deal of the rest of the biography and am now approaching the political part of the business. . . .

St. Ives, *Aug.* 23, 1885.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I am here for a holiday; but this year my holiday is no holiday. I am working hard to bring out my life of Fawcett. The first proof came to-day, and I have written most of it. . . . I hope to publish before Christmas. . . . My Thoby, rising five, produced a box the other day, which he called his 'contradictionary box,' and gave as a reason for the name that it was full (as indeed it was) of rubbish. What muddled notions had got into his little noddle I cannot imagine; but there were gleams of epigrammatic satire, as it seemed to me. Truly a dictionary is rubbishy enough. However, we are praised, and get on fairly well with spasms of bother. Things always seem to go wrong when I am out of town in order to spoil my holiday making. I am very nervous about my life of Fawcett now that I see it in type. Yet it is simple enough and ought to be an interesting book. He was a very much finer fellow in some ways than I knew. . . .

Nov. 24, 1885.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I write to you, firstly, to say that I have sent you my life of Fawcett. I hope that you will like it tolerably. Part of it, to tell you my own opinion, is, I think, interesting

and well done; of the rest, and greatest part, I can only say that I did it as well as I could under all the circumstances. I had two disadvantages which will, I fear, be fatal to the general interest of the book: viz., that I have been too much of a political outsider to give the proper 'local colour,' and that I had necessarily to go into some infernally dry places. However, it is off my mind, and I shall try to forget it as soon as possible.

My next reason for writing now is that I am embarked on a very different task, viz., writing a life of Carlyle for the Dictionary. . . . My general idea is to write a highly condensed life, throwing the domestic storms into the background, and insisting on C.'s hard struggle for life and independence. . .

May 6, 1886.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . The completion of Fawcett's life within a moderate time was only achieved by neglect of other duties. For some months I have been trying to get through a mass of arrears, and now I have worked myself free:—at least, comparatively free—I have, that is, no hideous list of lives that ought to have been written, glaring at me. I have done a considerable quantity of biography lately, including that old sinner S. T. C[oleridge], Cowper and Carlyle, and many others of less note. . . . I shall send the proof [of Carlyle] to you. . . .

We are expecting O. W. Holmes,[1] and I shall be rather amused to see—if indeed I do see—what the British public makes of him. At present we can talk of nothing but our Irish friends. I shall not say much of that, though I may say that I have never found any subject so all-pervading. I can't get away from it; which I dislike because I sympathise with nobody. I found one of my brats the other day—aged 4—pronouncing something to be a 'ghastly job.' I fancy that she must have heard some one discussing W. E. G.'s scheme. It does seem to me to be about the

[1] The father.

most insane contrivance that anybody ever blundered into. But what is a poor radical to do? I can't see my way through it all, and will not try to enlighten you. I shall bury myself in my dictionary and begin my next book, which is still in embryo. I feel ashamed when I think how writing of books is to me a mere sedative. If I went through some such agony as T[homas] C[arlyle] had to endure, I should perhaps turn out books with a dash of his qualities. As it is, I suppose that writing which is soothing in composition will never be very amusing in reading. . . .

By the way, I actually preached a sermon the other day—about 'Materialism,'[1] which I showed conclusively to mean something quite different from what anybody supposes it to mean. Really I plagiarised a bit of Comte. But the performance was rather comic. It was in Moncure Conway's old chapel. They asked me for a Sunday lecture; but I found that they aimed at a kind of service, singing Emerson, and taking the first lesson out of Mill and the second out of Wordsworth. It was a queer caricature; but I suppose it amuses some of them. I believe that I succeeded tolerably, and, though I assured them (politely I hope) that they could not understand a word I was saying, they did not appear to object. . . .

Aug. 4, 1886.

To Mrs. W. K. Clifford.

I have received your reproachful letter. I sympathise deeply, but I feel myself delightfully innocent. Did I ever tell you that there was never a mist on the Wengern Alp? Or that the Jungfrau could be seen in all weathers? I should as soon have thought of telling you that hotels sent in bills as of telling you that a view required sunshine. And the true moral is obvious. I hope that you have laid it to heart, in which case your visit to the W.A. will have borne fruit. It is this, that a conversion is useless unless you can touch the heart as well as affect the conduct. Had I communicated to you a true taste for mountains instead

[1] It now stands in 'An Agnostic's Apology.'

of persuading you to act for once as if you liked them, you would have waited a few hours longer and been rewarded by the finest view in Europe—a view as superior to Mürren or the Bel Alp as Shakespeare's plays to (say) Tennyson's. I am so sorry that your faithlessness should have lost such a sight that I cannot even be angry at your reproaches. . . . I would gladly spend a month of wet weather on the W.A. for a day of fine. And, after all, you must have been somewhere in the fog, and the W.A., in spite of your abuse, is as good as any other place for the purpose.

We are all well here; but, as Julia is writing, I will not go into details. A hideous packet from the Dictionary has come, which I have not yet had the courage to open. As soon as I have finished this, I must spend some hours of lovely holiday weather in my accursed drudgery. . . .

By the end of 1886 Stephen was showing serious signs of overwork. He was induced to put the Dictionary aside for two months, and to spend some days in the Playground. He paid a visit to Mrs. Clifford at Clarens near Montreux. She has kindly painted for me a little scene: Stephen unable to keep his eyes off the delectable mountains: and Stephen at his 'grumpiest' when catechised by an amiable clergyman. 'Did Mr. Stephen walk? Had he ever climbed? Had he ever known Mr. Fawcett? What was he doing now? Editing a little dictionary? That must be a very interesting occupation.' And then Mrs. Clifford adds that she and her guest suddenly went up in public esteem, for the great Melchior arrived with axe and rope, and Herr Stephen was striding off Zermattwards. M. Loppé and his wife and Stephen had a hotel to themselves, quit of all bores. The proprietor had done all for their comfort; even the key of the cellar had been entrusted to M. Loppé. But this was relatively a small matter. 'Stephen était heureux de retrouver ses forces, de se retremper dans cet air fortifiant, de revivre ses impressions de jeunesse.' Once more (Jan. 30, 1887) he stood on the Gorner Grat, and the day was cloudless. He returned to London feeling that he could wrestle with the dictionary.

'Le dictionaire me tuera peut-être,' he wrote, 'mais la maladie est lente.' Mrs. Stephen was not satisfied.

St. Ives, *April* 4, 1887.

To G. Croom Robertson.

. . . I feel a certain shyness in speaking about myself, but I can tell you on paper what is more difficult to say *viva voce*. I will confess that I don't like being entirely absorbed in the drudgery of dictionary. I am now far enough ahead with that to be able to reckon upon a certain amount of leisure. This I propose to devote to working upon a kind of history of the English Utilitarians, &c., Bentham, the Mills, and so on, after the plan of my Eighteenth Century. My difficulty is partly a spasmodic but oppressive modesty which tells me now and then that I am after all an amateur in metaphysics, logic, &c. &c., and have no right to speak about such subjects. I reply to myself that, after all, even amateurs are not so far behind professionals in that matter, and that I can give my impressions for what they are worth. I think the subject is a distinct one, and that the school is sufficiently rounded off to be a legitimate subject for writing upon, whilst by working steadily at it for ? years, I can enable myself to speak with discrimination if not with authority. Moreover, if one is too modest one does nothing. So I am pretty well resolved to take my courage in both hands and go at it. I shall hope often to consult you. But I confess that I should like to have your blessing at starting.

April 13, 1887.

To Mr. Norton.

This black edge signifies the death of my father-in-law, Dr. Jackson, a fine, kindly old man who lived to 82 without, so far as I know, a day's real ill-health till ten days before his death. . . . I am well enough, though not quite strong. I go on plodding through dismal sloughs of despond of the Dryasdust kind, wishing for Carlyle's powers of denunciation, and yet wondering at times whether on the whole it

is not what I am calculated for. Anyhow, as I have got to do it for some time to come, and get devilishly little satisfaction out of it or encouragement about it, I may as well cultivate a good healthy stolidity. So, if you will forgive me, I will just say 'Damn the whole concern,' and pass on. . . . I am losing friends terribly. Three of my best are all in very bad health at the moment, though I hope not fatally ill. . . . It strikes me that my letter is of a funereal kind in contents as well as decoration. But I am really tolerably cheerful, and shall be, so long as the babies grow fat and strong. . . . I have read 'Goethe and Carlyle' with pleasure and amusement.[1] I think Goethe's testimonial to Carlyle one of the most comic documents I ever read. If it had ever been sent in, it would fully account for T. C.'s failure. I fancy the Scotch professors reading it! You are a model editor. Blessed are the index makers; or at least they ought to be.

Nov. 11, 1887.

To Mr. Francis Darwin.

My dear Mr. Darwin,—I received your book a day or two ago, and bolted it whole.[2] I think you have done it admirably. I need say nothing of the autobiography. Your own account of your father's life seemed to me—and I could not praise it more highly—to fit in perfectly with his own writing. What surprised me more was that I have read all the scientific correspondence with equal interest in spite of my ignorance. I said to myself 'I shall skip this damned botany;' but I began and found it as interesting as all the rest. I take the explanation to be that in some curious way your father seems to show himself in every letter he ever wrote. Short and slight as my personal acquaintance with him was, I could almost see him and hear his voice and his laugh in each page as I read it. The characteristic 'by Jove' and the 'horrid bore' come in delightfully. I fancy that the same charm will be per-

[1] 'Correspondence between Goethe and Carlyle,' ed. C. E. Norton, 1887.
[2] 'Life of Charles Darwin.'

ceptible in a degree even to those who had not had my advantage of seeing him face to face. The only criticism I can imagine is that there may be rather an over dose of scientific discussion for the 'general reader.' But even the generalest reader will, I am sure, perceive the charm which no one to whom I have ever spoken failed to perceive in his presence and in his writings. I found it out long ago, when I read the 'Voyage of the Beagle'—knowing nothing but his name. And whatever the general reader may think, I am quite certain that every reasonable person will be impressed by the marvellous portrait of a great intellect. I know nothing like it. I have read nothing so interesting to me since (in a different direction in some ways) Lockhart's life of Scott. Therefore altogether I congratulate you most unequivocally on having put together the best possible memorial of your father. I fancy you must know with what sincere reverence and affection I have always regarded him; and I can say honestly that I don't wish a line changed (except the erratum or two which I enclose). . . .

Jan. 10, 1888.

To Mr. Thomas Hardy.

Many thanks for your New Year's gift [of 'Wessex Tales']. Yes, I give my mind to such 'vanities' whenever I can, seeing that it is generally filled by vanities more deserving the name: *e.g.*, by such questions as, Who wrote Junius? Was Thos. Gray's uncle named Thomas or William? The first of the above inquiries has wasted—I fear to think how much time; the last has already occupied an hour and is not worth a minute. It is a relief to come back, when I can, to literature.

My wife, if I may confess it, likes happy endings, as Darwin did, and found your story ['The Withered Arm'] rather too tragic. I was equally interested and have more corrupt tastes. I will allow myself one bit of criticism on a point that strikes me as rather curious. I don't think that you have exactly hit off the right line of belief. Either

I would accept the superstition altogether and make the wizard a genuine performer—with possibly some hint that you tell the story as somebody told it; or I would leave some opening as to the withering of the arm, so that a possibility of explanation might be suggested, though, of course, not too much obtruded. Something, *e.g.*, might have happened to impress the sufferer's imagination, so that the marks would be like the stigmata of papists.

As it is, I don't quite know where I am. I begin as a believer and end up as a sceptic.

I will not give my reasons, which would be superfluous, but content myself with showing that I have not quite lost the instinct for giving an editorial prod.

Jan. 11, 1888.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I have been very well since I came home; but am said by affectionate people to be beginning to look fagged. This is only a kind fiction started to excuse a brief run to the Alps. That monomania still thrives, and I encourage it mildly, inasmuch as it is becoming desirable to cling to one's youthful follies. I shall only rush to Berne, go to Grindelwald to worship the Schreckhorn, and be back again in ten days. . . . Perhaps it is a superstition, but I imagine that I shall return to the Dictionary with renewed vigour. That damned thing goes on like a diabolical piece of machinery, always gaping for more copy, and I fancy at times that I shall be dragged into it, and crushed out into slips. . . . When I have a few hours I have to go off to see Cotter Morison, who is, I fear, sinking, though the doctors don't precisely admit it, and Croom Robertson who is again laid on his back. . . . Morley has had a very sharp attack. . . . So my little world has rather a hospital atmosphere. . . .

Stephen spent a happy fortnight at Grindelwald with Mr. Freshfield and M. Loppé. He was hardly back again before Mrs. Stephen saw that he was 'weighed down by the burden

of his unending work.' Then came the catastrophe in the form of a fit. He was told that such an attack need not happen again if only he would rest his brain. Thereupon, so I observe, the tone of his letters changes. To a few very intimate friends he had been groaning over the Dictionary. Only to a few. This I will say of Stephen: he manfully consumed his own smoke. If he wished 'to howl like Carlyle,' he never howled in public. Nor in private either. Already in those days I knew him well. I heard some powerful language about the Dictionary, about the old man of the sea, slough of despond, Serbonian bog, and the like, but it used to make me laugh, and Stephen would not have tolerated me if I had not laughed. He never complained; he swore, I admit, though his execratory vocabulary was by no means copious; but he never complained. And then, when Mrs. Stephen was trying to put the drag on, and asking a friend to help her, the Dictionary became in its editor's talk and letters an extremely simple piece of mechanism that almost edited itself. His blood was up by this time. He meant to traverse that snowfield, though a storm was muttering and a flash had come dangerously near him.

St. Ives, *Sept.* 5, 1888.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I have been idle for the last two months. . . . I hope to go back quite well in a month. As for the work itself—the dictionary—nobody can think less of it than I do. I should be very sorry to sacrifice either myself or my family to such an idol. Many other people, I have no doubt, could do it quite as well or better. But I feel that I ought not to leave Smith in the lurch, and of course my own self-esteem is more or less involved in pushing it through. Therefore I must do my best to make such arrangements as will enable me to keep on editing without too great a sacrifice of energy. I have another bit of work in my mind, which I shall be glad to finish. I don't suppose that it matters very much; but I don't like giving in while I still feel capable of some decent work. . . . I have injured

myself by going to what is here looked upon as a very rowdy kind of affair, a wrestling match—in which I greatly delight. Unluckily a stand fell and squeezed one of my fingers. It is now nearly well, and I suppose that the respectable would think me served rightly. I can walk twenty miles without feeling it, and am really unconscious of being an invalid.

Jan. 1, 1889.

To Mr. John Morley.

I was very glad to get your 'Wordsworth.'[1] . . . You fill my heart with jealousy and malevolence. You have given the lie to any misgivings I may have had as to your political career, and, not content with that, you come back to cut out us poor literary gents. You have spoken more to the purpose than I could have done about Wordsworth, though he is a favourite of mine. To nearly all that you say I could subscribe. The chief difference, I think, would be that I should attach rather more value to Wordsworth's 'philosophy.' The common error of critics is now (in my opinion) not to exaggerate, but to diminish the importance of that element. Poets certainly 'don't live by systems.' Nor, for the matter of that, do philosophers. I think that a philosophy is really made more of poetry than of logic; and the real value both of poetry and philosophy is, not the pretended reasoning, but the exposition in one form or other of a certain view of life. Gracious goodness! I am beginning an essay and pull up sharp.

Jan. 20, 1889.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I am going with my wife to take a three weeks holiday in the Alps. . . . We shall probably begin by staying at Davos with Symonds, who is very hospitable and friendly. . . . I have led a specially quiet life of late, amusing myself by reading a little biography for a change—

[1] 'Wordsworth's Works,' ed. by J. Morley, 1888.

a good many Newmanite lives in particular. Some day I shall remark upon the extraordinary phenomenon that Mill and Newman and Carlyle all lived in the same century. Carlyle seems to me bigger in comparison with his contemporaries than ever ; but I wish we had an equally powerful trio going just now. . . . I feel fragments of my old Alpine ardour reviving ; but I shall have to look at my old friends from their feet—which is the wrong way. . . .

Mrs. Stephen went with her husband to Switzerland this time ; she hardly dared to let him go out of her sight. Grindelwald became holier than ever for him. A photograph taken by M. Loppé in the ' Bear ' shows Mrs. Stephen looking out of the window into the glare of the snow-light. That picture became a treasured relic. The face is very anxious. Stephen's feelings about the Dictionary were mixed ; Mrs. Stephen's were not. However, the editor returned to his task in good heart. Somehow or another he found time to write for *Mind* two papers on ' Some Kinds of Necessary Truth,' which I have heard praised.[1] There were some kinds of necessary truth about the limits of human faculties which Stephen would only learn in a grossly empirical fashion.

March 3, 1889.

To a Contributor.

My dear Mr. X,—Many thanks for your articles. I have been forced to take liberties with one or two. Unless I make a firm stand against the amount of MS. which comes in, we shall be crushed. Everybody thinks his own case exceptional, and takes advantage of every precedent—(' Everybody ' = some people). What I must hold to is the scale. [Two special cases noticed.] I know how hard this is upon contributors, who take so much trouble and lose so much of the results. But I am really driven to bay, and can only say for your comfort that the mangling process is the most painful part of my duties. I would give anything to send all articles to press as they come ; but I should be

[1] *Mind* (1889), xiv. 50, 188.

simply swamped. I must throw myself on your kind consideration and apologise in advance. Otherwise the articles are all I want.

May 6, 1889.

To the same CONTRIBUTOR.

DEAR MR. X,—You are of course right to speak to me frankly. I will answer as well as I can, though with the disadvantage of writing partly from memory. First, however, I am seriously disturbed by the tendency of lives to grow longer on the average. Unless this can be kept within bounds, the consequence will be that the Dictionary, if it survives at all, will spread beyond all assignable limits. I am daily wrestling with the problem, and one mode of meeting it is of course by a correction, *i.e.* a mutilation, of MS., which is to me most vexatious because it must annoy contributors and because it tries my strength more than anything. Yet as people are always giving reasons—and good ones in themselves—for further extension, what am I to do? If I could talk to you for five minutes I could make this clearer.

[Three special cases are argued at some length.][1]

As for A., I certainly thought that the novelty of the information was not a sufficient reason for the elaborate details. They might be admissible in a magazine article, but all the ins and outs of his career are surely not worth giving. Quacks, of course, should come in, but I think that we should have the pith of them, not the full length account. If I remember rightly, there were some long quotations from Walpole—to which I always object. . . .

I will add that my impression was that you had been interested in these people, and had launched out at considerably greater length than before. . . . I am driven on all sides, but I am really most worried by inflicting injury upon contributors. Nobody is more sensible than I am of the annoyance to writers of wasting research, and I am truly sorry to have annoyed you. Only what can I do?

[1] The whole letter covers eight sides.

I wish that you could look in here some afternoon between 3.30 and 5, when I am always here. My health has forced me to shorten my hours. If you would bring one of the type-written articles I would give you my reasons in detail. Anyhow I feel that a short talk might put us on a better understanding.

June 16, 1889.

To Mr. Horace Smith.[1]

My dear Smith,—Your volume of poems is just come to hand. I have read those that you prescribed—and others. The *Boating Song* and *The Light of Summer Sunset* (which last I have always remembered) took me strangely back to old days.[2] I was at Cambridge last Sunday, where my (step) son—he is as good as a son—is just taking his degree. I saw 'Youth at the "Plough,"' &c. Nay, I saw the fall of Trinity Hall from its high position, and with tearless eyes. We are not now what in old days we were; though, indisputably, that which we are we are, anyhow. I saw the ancient Fairrie and thought much of old happy days and old friends. It gives me the keenest pleasure that any of them should still think of me as kindly as you do. I don't deserve it; but perhaps I like it all the better. Cambridge is a haunted place, and such of my contemporaries as remain are chiefly heads of houses; but at least I have not forgotten, nor shall I ever forget, the old friendships. So it was a good thought of yours to send me your poems. What I have read has pleased me, though I cannot answer for it that *part* of the pleasure is not due to the donor. I am glad that you are out of fear of attornies.[3] Well, good-bye old friend. You must imagine a very hearty shake of the hand.

Stephen tried not without success to do but little that summer. He came back to London hoping, so he said, 'to

[1] Sometime a pupil of Stephen's at Trinity Hall.

[2] The volume in question is 'Poems,' published in 1889; but it contains *The Light of Summer Sunset*, which had appeared already in 1860.

[3] Mr. Smith had lately become a police magistrate.

flog the old hack into a canter.' But he was at once struck down at the Athenæum while explaining to a friend how strong he was. The sentence for this second offence was three months absolute idleness—to begin with. Since May Mr. George Smith had been aware of Mrs. Stephen's fears. He wrote to her in generous terms, pointing out that he could do nothing. If he said a word about retirement, Stephen would think, quite erroneously, that he was not giving satisfaction. There was delicacy on both sides.

St. Ives, *Sept.* 14, 1889.

To Mr. Sidney Lee.

Your letter is as considerate and kind as usual. . . . I have some thoughts—but of course this is confidential—of proposing to Smith to drop one issue, advertising that the illness of the editor had made this necessary, and that he was now well again. This would certainly take a load off my back and give me a chance, though I should very much dislike any appearance of breaking down. . . . I could say more; but I don't want to write more than is necessary, and the whole thing is rather complicated and my brain rather muddled. I will only say, once more, that I feel always that the credit of getting on with such punctuality is mainly due to you; and that I am not ungrateful. . . .

Dec. 1, 1889.

To George Smith.

I feel it to be impossible for me to accept the enclosed, which I therefore return with many thanks. I hope to be able to look in and talk over matters with Lee occasionally; but I ought not to undertake, and indeed could not undertake, to do so as a regular duty. I must, in short, be free from all obligation, and while I was receiving payment I could not feel that to be the case. I hope that I shall be strong enough some day to take the helm again, though not to do all that I used to do; and so I shall then make no difficulties. But till that is the case I cannot

take anything. I am sure that you will understand my feeling.

Dec. 2, 1889.

GEORGE SMITH *to* LESLIE STEPHEN.

'I am sorry that you have returned the little cheque. But I understand your feeling in the matter, and I think that I shall best show my appreciation of it by not discussing it. I will only say that I had no intention that you should consider yourself obliged to do anything, and at our last interview I emphasised, or at all events intended to emphasise, my view on that point.' . . .

Dec. 12, 1889.

To MR. NORTON.

. . . As for the Dictionary, I have put it into commission upon such terms that if I have to retire, it will, I think, be able to go on under its present management; and if I am strong enough I may after a few months take the helm again, though I must never again try to be, as I was, both captain and mate, besides occasionally acting as sailor before the mast. I shall only, at the outside, be a kind of president of a committee of management.

It is a disappointment to me, as you may believe; but I really do not fret. I fully expect to get straight again, and shall be able to work at things more interesting to me. I see a book, at which I am working—not working, but mooning over at odd times. . . .

Shortly after this Stephen told Smith that Mr. Lee's name ought to appear along with his own. 'If I am unable to return, it may be well to drop me by degrees . . . but I think that till the October volume, at any rate, the title-page may have both names.' Both names appear in the volume for March 1890. Stephen hoped that a visit to America might give him strength enough to sustain his fair share of the editorial work. His third visit to America was very brief. One part of his errand was sad. He was going to see

Lowell, who was ill: to see him for the last time. He went in June and was back in July, an honorary doctor of Harvard. He told George Smith that he had made a distinct step upwards. 'I shall be quite pleased to put my finger in the pie again, though I must, of course, be careful not to put it too far.' He set to work with vigour; and incidentally fired another volley at 'Cardinal Newman's Scepticism.'[1] Then on New Year's Day went out the joyful exclamation: 'J'ai obtenu la permission de visiter les Alpes!' Ten beatific days were spent with M. Loppé at Engelberg. All looked well, when influenza finished the work that other troubles had begun. Doctors said peremptorily that there must be no more editing. Happily the Dictionary was safe. Of Mr. Lee's ability it would be impertinent to speak; of his loyalty at a trying time much could be said. At my request, and to my great profit, he has looked back at the vast mass of letters that he received from Stephen, and, after telling me much of the history of the Dictionary, has written some words that I am fain to repeat. 'With myself Stephen's relations were noble. He was always magnanimity itself. It is with pride and thankfulness that I have been going through the generous words which he was constantly addressing me alike during the early and the last days of the Dictionary.'

April 7 [1891].

Mrs. Stephen *to* George Smith.

'Dear Mr. Smith,—My husband asks me to write this. Though he is steadily getting over his attack, it has become perfectly plain to him that he must henceforward give up any attempt to edit the Dictionary. He will try to come and see you whenever he is able, but he thinks it desirable that you should understand at once that this is the state of the case. Leslie has insisted on dictating this, and, as his mind is for ever on the Dictionary, it is as well it should be over. He has no idea how very serious and complicated his illness has been, though I think he acknowledges now that for some time the strain has been too great for him. It is impossible with

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, Feb. 1891.

his nature for him to do half work. The doctor is satisfied with the progress that he makes, but it must be a long convalescence, and his weakness is very great.

'Yours sincerely,
'JULIA STEPHEN.'

DORKING, *May* 14, 1891.

To MR. SIDNEY LEE.

. . . I am not anxious to do Maine, but I will ask Pollock (M.'s executor) whether he will do him, and, if not, see about it myself. Also I am not particular about Mansel, who might be done better by some Oxford man; nor am I specially anxious to do Maurice. Only I think that I should do him better than Canon O[verton]. . . . I should like Mandeville; but I don't care about Zach. Macaulay, Mallet or Mason. . . . I don't know that it is necessary to say it, but for the future you must say *editor* not *editors*, and my name must be removed from the title-page of the next volume.[1]

June 6, 1891.

To MR. NORTON.

. . . I have finally given up the Dictionary and so I have a great weight off my shoulders. I shall now work only at more congenial subjects, and at my own time. I have been looking over certain old papers to see whether I can concoct such a book as you suggested to me—an 'Agnostic's Apology'—and I shall, I think, be able to manage it. You will be in a great measure responsible for that and other encouragement. I am also working at Bentham and the Mills, of whom I think that I can make a tolerably interesting story. These two works will take time and trouble; but they interest me, whatever they may do for others. By the way, I was a good deal tickled the other day by finding that in a new American University called the Sage (did you ever

[1] Stephen did write Maine, Mansel, Maurice, Mandeville, and Zachary (as well as T. B.) Macaulay. The volume published in the summer (vol. xxvii) is 'edited by Sidney Lee.'

hear of it ?), they take for ethical text-books my 'Science of Ethics' and Butler's 'Sermons.' I like to be coupled with the bishop! . . .

July 7, 1891.

To Sir F. Pollock.

The inkstand from the Tramps came last night, and surprised me not a little. I need hardly say that I was touched and pleased as well as surprised. . . . I am glad that the Tramps think me still capable of using ink, however incompetent I may be in other things. I shall, however, be greatly disappointed if I am not able to join them, occasionally at least, after the summer. . . . Off to-morrow for St. Ives.

So Stephen was not cast down. When the doctors passed sentence, there was one brief explosion ('Give up the Dictionary!'); then silence; then 'I'll try to be good.' It was a disappointment. He had begun to take a father's pride in the detested but beloved monster. Impatient of small woes, he could rise to a great occasion. If he could not edit, he could write. He never thought himself indispensable. The rocks and shoals were passed, and the gallant ship would make a prosperous voyage after dropping the pilot.

XIX

AN AGNOSTIC'S APOLOGY

(1891–1895)

It was with shaken health that Stephen retired from the struggle. He had for the first time, so he complains, 'to coddle himself,' and he did not take kindly to that occupation. In Cornwall short strolls were to be a substitute for long walks. A taste for field botany was encouraged, and there was a good deal of billiard playing on a domestic undersized table; but an ex-president of the Alpine Club must needs attempt to haul himself to the top of a wall by the aid of a branch, which broke, and a dislocated shoulder was the result. Moreover, there was a sort of lust for pen and ink which was not easily repressible. Stephen was reasonable, but somewhat restive under restraint. It was difficult, for example, to persuade him that time spent over a meal is well spent, and he would sigh for an age when human nature's daily food will be a few meat lozenges consumed in privacy. Some restiveness might be expected. There was much life in him still when he was in his sixtieth year. He had yet in him the matter of a dozen volumes, and there were still many lives that he could write for the Dictionary.

'The Utilitarians' who had been thought of before the Dictionary was conceived, and who had been studied at intervals ever since, became at this point the subject of serious work; but they were pushed aside first by 'An Agnostic's Apology' and then by the 'Life of Sir J. F. Stephen.' Leslie had often been pressed to collect his 'agnostic' essays, some of which were by this time fifteen years old. As on a former occasion, so now, the requisite encouragement came from Mr. Norton.

It need hardly be said that Stephen never shrank from stating in the plainest terms his rejection of Christian dogma. It seemed to him not only untrue, but harmful. There are few places in which the arguments for an economy of negative truth have been better stated or more bravely encountered than the essay on 'The Religion of All Sensible Men.'[1] He never was in the unhappy plight of those who fear to see the spread of their own beliefs and disbeliefs. What was good enough for him was good enough for the masses. He was not sanguine; he did not think that a millennium of rationalism was near at hand; but neither did he think that men are for ever doomed to mistake legend for history and fable for fact. Philosophical problems were another matter, and he was shy of giving his opinion about them, because, as he often said, he felt himself to be an amateur. The consequence is that we only obtain glimpses when some of us might wish for a view. In this quarter there was, I fancy, a gradual change. He had been influenced by Comte and Lewes—more by them, I think, than by Spencer—and had held, so it seems to me, that a definite ring-fence could be drawn around the knowable at an assignable place and for assignable reasons. Later on there were doubts about the place and doubts about the reasons, and instead of an extrusion of metaphysics by arguments which themselves may be called metaphysical, we have an appeal, an impressive appeal, to the results of a painfully long experiment extending through the centuries. Lines that were ever 'humming themselves in his head' state the experience of the race:

> Myself when young did eagerly frequent
> Doctor and saint, and heard great argument
> About it and about: but evermore
> Came out by the same door where in I went.

At the same time, a place was found for metaphysics, and in some sort a high place. They will not lead to discoveries, but they are a legitimate, normal, and interesting branch of imaginative literature. The poet and the philosopher have

[1] The last essay in the 'Apology.'

this in common : they prove nothing, but by utterly dissimilar means they 'suggest a view of life.' Your system, when you have made it, will not be adequate or coherent. Assuredly you will come out by the same door where in you went ; but in the course of arguing 'about it and about,' you, if you are honest with the hard facts and have the proper kind of imaginative power, are not unlikely to hit on some formula, some scheme, which will serve as a mould, a temporary mould, for some part of our small knowledge. At any rate, you are very likely, and this you will enjoy, to disprove the adequacy and coherence of other people's systems and to explode some vulgar fallacies.[1] But I have no right or title to expound the little that Stephen could bring himself to publish about questions that were constantly in his mind. His hints, I think, are those of a man who thought of poetry while he read philosophy, of philosophy while he read poetry, and of stubborn fact—especially of the lives of concrete men and women—while he read everything. As to the 'Agnostic's Apology and other Essays,' it can now be bought for sixpence.

In January 1894 Stephen saw the Alps for the last time, having little reason to fear that he would see them no more. In the autumn he published the new 'Playground' with its charming dedication to M. Loppé—a very different book, it will be remembered, from the original 'Playground.' The public liked the new book : a reprint was issued in the winter.

But we will turn to the letters of this time. The first is sad. Lowell was dying. On June 21 he had sent his last message : 'I thank God for that far-away visit of yours, which began for me one of the dearest friendships of my life. How vividly I remember our parting under the lamp-post when you went away!'

St. Ives, *July* 28, 1891.

To Mr. Norton.

I received your sad news to-day. I need not say what a sorrow it is to my wife and myself. When one's best hope

[1] *See* 'The Vanity of Philosophising' in 'Social Rights and Duties,' vol. ii. p. 183.

for a friend is a quick and easy exit, it leaves no words to be spoken. I will not try to say anything. Only, I will ask you to give any messages from me which could give him a moment's pleasure. You cannot say anything too cordial. Nobody has been a better friend, and I think the better of myself when I remember how kindly he received me thirty years ago (nearly) and how affectionate he has been to me ever since. My wife is writing to him to-day, in case he should be able to receive any pleasure from a letter. . . .

ST. IVES, *Sept.* 1, 1891.

To G. CROOM ROBERTSON.

. . . I think a great deal of my dear Lowell, who used to enjoy visits to us here and peeps at the Land's End. I have the usual feeling that I hardly made enough of my friend while I had him. Happily, I think that he had in a singular degree the merit of perceiving very quickly the feelings of others: a kind of feminine power of intuition, and I am glad to think that he recognised my strong affection for him. They asked me to write about him the other day in some Review; but I did not feel equal to it. I could not criticise, and did not like to trot out my feelings towards him. Perhaps some day I may say something. Meanwhile I draw the moral to make as much of the friends I have. I need not tell you who is one of the very best.

Oct. 9, 1891.

To MR. NORTON.

. . . I am glad that you are about to publish such a memorial to Lowell. Nobody wrote better letters, and I was so much charmed with those which he sent me that I have exempted many from the flames, which have consumed nearly every other letter I have received. I turned them over last night, and feel rather perplexed. They are most charming and full of kind things about me and my scribblings. I should not like to publish things of that kind. . . .

Nov. 2, 1891.

To Mr. Norton.

I have made copies of Lowell's letters to myself, and will send them to you in a day or two. . . . I have made a few omissions, chiefly of passages about little things of temporary interest, messages about engagements and so forth, and, in one or two cases, passages referring to people in a way that they might not quite approve. In all the letters, however, I have not found a single unkind phrase about anybody. The absence of even an occasional sarcasm struck me as remarkable. If I had been selecting for publication I should have suppressed a good deal more; but I reflected that I was only selecting materials for a second selection. For this reason I decided to send you nearly all that he said about my books and articles. You will have such a mass of materials, I guess, that you will in any case take only a fraction of what I send, and it is doubtful to me whether any of this part of the letters should be printed. Some of the remarks, however, are interesting as giving his judgment of books and of certain opinions held by me and others. I can trust you implicitly not to publish anything which it would be conceited on my part to give to the world—('See what a man like Lowell thought of me!')—or would make his partiality too marked. He declares several times that he was not prejudiced in my favour, *i.e.*, not biassed as a critic by his prejudices; but I know he was, and though I love him all the more, I ought not to communicate his weaknesses in that direction to the world at large. When Hume told Home that the play of *Douglas* was as good as *Othello*, I think Home might as well have suppressed the letter. (This, by the way, is not precisely historical.) I should like to see something testifying to his affection for me, for I am proud of it. But I should be very sorry to see him (or myself, for that matter) made to look silly on account of it. However, I leave everything to your judgment.

Lowell's letters, if I may judge from these specimens and others that I have seen, will prove conclusively the

falsity of the common theory that the art of letter-writing is being lost. I don't think that Cowper or Gray or any one could write better.

I have been deeply touched by his kindness to me. There is a little reference to our parting at the corner of the lane in 1863 which is repeated more than once, and comes in his very last letters nearly thirty years after the event. He only knew me then as a young wandering Briton on a sight-seeing tour, and I think the better of myself for having been, so to speak, fallen in love with by such a man. Alas! the letters make me feel what I have felt in other cases, how inadequately I have valued my best friendships when I had them. I did not undervalue his in one way—I was always proud of it and did my best to preserve it; but I might have seen him oftener and written more regularly. Yet I have less to reproach myself with in regard to him than in some other cases. Don't let me ever have such a feeling about our friendship! . . .

Now I have to thank you for your 'Dante.'[1] I am, unluckily, no judge of the translation, because—I am heartily ashamed of myself—I cannot read the original. I am the more ashamed because 'Dante' has always had a strange sort of fascination for me, even though only in 'cribs.' One of my childish recollections is of being discovered by an aunt when I was not eight years old reading Cary's 'Dante' and thinking that I had done something wicked. It is a very queer world that he takes one to—I mean the medieval world. As for the world downstairs, I can only say that, on the whole, I am very glad that it is abolished; but I suppose that it had its uses. But people's nerves must surely have been rather coarse when they supped on such horrors. However, I am no critic of 'Dante,' and only utter the naïve impressions of a Philistine—to use the word of poor Mat. Arnold, who was set up in Westminster Abbey last Saturday with a most feeble speech from X.

I have another thing to say. The other day an 'agent of a wealthy American'—so he called himself, wanted to

[1] The Divine Comedy,' translated by C. E. Norton, 1891.

buy some MSS. of Thackeray belonging to me. I told him that I would not sell—I should feel it rather mean. I have often thought, however, that such MSS. should be in some public place. In the British Museum they would be nearly lost amid the masses of other MSS. Miss Thackeray (as she then was) gave the MS. of 'The Newcomes' to the Charterhouse, and Trinity at Cambridge has the MS. of 'Esmond.'[1] Now I should like to give something to your library at Harvard, where I fancy it would be valued. I will offer you a choice: either the original MS. of 'The Roundabout Papers' (a few of them are missing, but I have nearly all) or the original MS. of 'The Orphan of Pimlico,' which was published (with some other papers) by Miss Thackeray in 1876. . . . Choose, therefore; or rather make my offer, if you will be so kind, to the proper authorities and let them choose. . . .

L. Stephen, LL.D. of Harvard.

April 14, 1892.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . My wife's mother died here a fortnight ago. She was a most tender, affectionate, and noble nature, and I am half ashamed to think how fond she was of me. . . . I must also report progress as to the Lowell Memorial of which you have probably heard, though I think I have not written to you since it began. At my wife's suggestion I wrote to the *Times* on Lowell's birthday proposing such a memorial. I got a good many promises of support. We formed a committee, and almost every one has been very cordial. The difficulty first arose as to the site. The committee proposed Westminster Abbey; but the Dean (Bradley) very politely declined on grounds which are at least very strong. The space is so limited that it must be kept for native Englishmen. He made, however, another suggestion which we received as excellent. [Windows in the Chapter House suggested.] Meanwhile we have a very good committee. The Duke of Argyll, Lord Coleridge,

[1] By the gift of Leslie Stephen.

James Martineau, Lecky, George Meredith, and most of the literary people have joined and been generally very hearty. I feel, therefore, pretty confident that we shall succeed in putting up a decent memorial. I am glad of it, though I don't much love memorials. . . .

I have nearly finished putting together that 'Agnostic's Apology,' of which we talked at Cambridge [Mass.]. I want to polish it up a bit more, and I think that I shall publish it, probably in the autumn. I found some of my old essays rather better than I had fancied, and it may be worth collecting them. . . .

June 15, 1892.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I was made into an honorary doctor of letters the other day by our Cambridge, and may wear a gorgeous scarlet gown. The occasion was the installation of the Duke of Devonshire as chancellor, when such honours are distributed. My visits to Cambridge are always a bit melancholy now. I see so many gaps! One old friend—the strongest man, I used to think, of his time—was being wheeled about in an arm-chair, paralytic; and the legs of another were distorted by rheumatism; and all my surviving companions seem to be heads of houses—a title which in my petulant youth I thought equivalent to old fogey of the fogeyest kind. In other respects, however, I am always rather attracted by the old place and am glad to receive a compliment from it. Chamberlain and Morley were the great guns of the occasion and did the oratory, having to describe each other as 'right honourable friends.' . . .

St. Ives, *July* 14, 1892.

To G. Croom Robertson.

. . . I have been putting together certain old essays of mine for publication. . . . I wish that you were here, that we might talk over one or two points which occur to me; but perhaps I should be too shy even with you. With my

usual propensity for making incursions into extraneous matters, I have been going through Harnack's 'Dogmengeschichte,' and trying to make intelligible to myself what was the real point about the famous diphthong, *i.e.*, not the logical point, but the genuine motives for the row. It seems to me one of the most curious points in history, and if I were *x* years younger I would try to read some of the originals. . . .

St. Ives, *July* 31, 1892.

To G. Croom Robertson.

. . . I have nearly finished my bit of essay-collecting, and am doubting whether to suppress or publish. I know that the end will be publication; but I feel as if I were quite undecided. That 'shyness' of which I spoke, and to which you refer, may be easily explained. Certainly in one and the chief sense there is no one with whom I should be so little shy as with you. But I always suffer from a latent conviction that I am an impostor and that somebody will find me out. So far as my impostorship takes the form of incapacity in the philosophical direction, no one is so likely to find me out as you. . . . For a long time past I have felt that I get no better cordial outside my household than I used to get in my weekly calls upon you. . . .

Nothing happens here, and the chief event of my life has been the discovery of the *Stachys germanica*, which, according to my botanical table, does not grow in these parts. I know a good many plants now, and feel the pursuit excellent for an elderly gentleman. It gives a motive for many pleasant strolls at a mild pace.

St. Ives, *Sept.* 27, 1892.

To Mr. Horace Smith.[1]

Your letter, though not your essay,[2] has reached me here. I shall be glad to read anything you have written, and am pleased if any encouragement of mine (I do not

[1] See above p 399.

[2] Mr. Smith published the first volume of his 'Interludes,' in 1892.

think that there was ever a 'Stephen prize,' but there was *a* prize) has contributed to your writing. Even if I did not like your book, I should be glad to find that you remember me with kindness. Such friendly recollections grow more valuable as life goes on. I am much of a stranger at Trin. Hall, and was a little vexed, though more amused, to discover when I was there not long ago that a young porter not only did not know me but had never heard of me. There was, he kindly said, *one* very ancient college servant who would probably remember me if, as I stated, I had once been a resident fellow. Old Ben, indeed, keeps up the connexion. I have forgotten—that is, not forgotten, but ceased to resent—certain old grievances of a trifling kind and feel amiably about him. He is undoubtedly a thoroughly good-natured and well-meaning person, and has done his duty according to his lights. Alas! I have lost many friends of late. One of my very dearest friends[1] died a week ago. My nephew, Jim, a wonderfully promising lad, of whom I was very fond, died this spring under most melancholy circumstances, of which you probably know. His father, Fitzjames, lives, but is a changed man and will never be able to do any more work, and such a life is almost as sad as actual loss. These and other losses make me feel rather lonely, though I am as happy as a man can be in a wife and family who are the best fence against outward troubles. Well, I only say this to explain that I am especially glad to have a shake of the hand from you. . . .

St. Ives, *Sept.* 30, 1892.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I have had a similar loss in Croom Robertson. . . . I feel the blow which leaves a great blank in my life. I used to see him and have long talks with him every week. He was a man of astonishing knowledge in his own department and full of all kinds of interests. His affectionate nature and his amazing patience under all the miseries of a stone in his kidney was enough to make one love him.

[1] Croom Robertson.

It is a satisfaction to me to think that I did a little to give him pleasure. I have no friend left on this side of the water with whom I can talk so freely and fully and with such confidence of sympathy. One begins to learn by experience what is meant by growing old and solitary. Happily, I have my own little circle, within which I am safe at present. But this year I have lost not only Robertson but my nephew Jim and my mother-in-law, whose presence in our household was always a blessing. . . .

I am reprinting my 'Hours in a Library,'[1] of which there is nothing to be said, and have also sent to press that 'Apology' of mine. I do not think, by the way, that 'Apology' implies any admission of the justice or even the plausibility of attacks.[2] It only means that one has been abused; and that is undeniable. As for the thing itself, I have taken some trouble in re-writing, adding a good deal and trying to make the detached articles into a kind of whole. But it is not quite a satisfactory method, though the only one open to me at the moment. When I go back, I shall set to work again upon my Utilitarians. I have been getting them up, and am in hopes of making a tolerable job of it. . . .

Dec. 7, 1892.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I shall probably send you before long my 'Agnostic's Apology.' I have finished the proofs of it with (I hope temporary) disgust. We seem to be going through a cold fit just now in regard to such matters. At least, the magazines are not so full of them as they were and talk chiefly of socialism. Meanwhile I am beginning to take hold a little of my next book about the Utilitarians. . . . So much for the world of letters! No, by the way, I have received an honour which pleases me and rather amuses me. I have been elected President of the London Library

[1] The new and enlarged edition of 1892 in three volumes.

[2] Mr. Norton had alluded to George III.'s remark about Bishop Watson's 'Apology for the Bible.'

in succession to Tennyson, who succeeded Houghton, who succeeded Carlyle; so that the position has hitherto been respectable. It amused me because the election is made by the committee, and the first proposal was to elect Gladstone. Somebody then proposed me, and modesty induced me to retire from the room. Otherwise I should have liked to hear a comparison between my claims and those of the great man. As it is, he is my Vice, or one of them, and I am one of the few people who can be called his superior. . . .

Oct. 29, 1893.

To Mr. Norton.

Your letter came a few days ago and was followed in due course by your volumes.[1] . . . What was somehow least expected by me, though I ought to have realised it, was the strength of his [Lowell's] poetical ambition in early life. As I said before, I probably did not do justice to his poems—other than the *Biglow Papers* and the *Commemoration Ode*. I certainly did not in my article,[2] but I doubt whether I did in my own mind. I like them, but they do not take hold of me as first-rate. It sounds almost disloyal to be saying this; and I do not love him one jot the less. But so it is, and therefore I was rather unprepared for the evidently strong conviction that he was essentially a poet. He was, of course, in a degree; but his prose lays hold of me more. I fancy at times, as one may fancy of every one, that more might have been got out of him: it is one of the many blunders of providence that we can only make one experiment of living; we might do so much better with a second; but, on the whole, he managed to utter himself very effectually, and, if a man does that, I don't think that the form or the quantity matters very much. Anyhow, I love him even as an author, as some people love Charles Lamb and other favourites; I think that he was about as good on paper as any of them; and then, I have

[1] 'Letters of J. R. Lowell,' 1894.

[2] Published many years ago, and not bearing Stephen's name.

the blessing of remembering him in his own person. It is one of the greatest comforts that remain to me, and will stick to me as long as I live. . . .

Dec. 4, 1893.

To Mr. C. F. Adams.[1]

My dear Sir,—I have received your kind letter, which was followed by your lectures upon Massachusetts.[2] Your good opinion of my work would in any case have given me pleasure. You have also managed, however, to touch me in a very sensitive place. It happens that I always liked a chapter in my 'Agnostic's Apology' from which you quote a sentence on page 65 of your book; and, not only so, but I liked that particular sentence.[3] Nobody else that I know of has taken notice of either, to me at least. Therefore your praise is particularly welcome, for I don't know how you can flatter an author more agreeably than by picking out his pet phrases.

I cannot speak of your lectures as a competent critic, for I know nothing of New England history, except your friend Jonathan Edwards I once wrote about him and picked out some of the passages you quote, *e.g.*, his remarks about the spider. But your general argument interests me very much, and happens to fall in with some reflections which have lately occupied me in connexion with a piece of work of my own. I have been thinking about the Scottish church—kirk I ought to say—and Buckle's remarks. I do not think him quite right in calling the case 'paradoxical.' The Scots, I take it, were no more slaves of their ministers than their ministers of them. The ministers were bigoted

[1] Mr. Charles Francis Adams, son and namesake of the distinguished statesman, had purchased a copy of the 'Agnostic's Apology,' and was moved thereby to write to its author. See the speech delivered by Mr. Adams as President of the Massachusetts Historical Society (*Proceedings*, 1903–1904, p. 255) after Stephen's death.

[2] 'Massachusetts: its Historians and its History,' 1893.

[3] An Agnostic's Apology,' p. 309: 'The grave humourists, indeed, who call themselves historians of philosophy seem to be at times under the impression that the development of the world has been affected by the last new feat of some great man in the art of logical hair-splitting.'

because they had bigoted congregations, and the truth is, I take it, that the kirk really represented the democratic element in Scotland and was popular because it represented the people in a way which their Parliament did not. It had, even through the eighteenth century, the same sort of hold on the country that the Irish priests have on their people. After the Union, the Assembly was the one representative body, and while in England the church was practically the property of the landed gentry, who gave all the preferment to their sons and dependants, the Scotch minister was constantly the son of a peasant or small farmer, and the body altogether national in a sense in which the Anglican church has never been. Therefore, it was both democratic and superstitious.

I see that I have begun an essay. But I am struck by the likeness of the Scotch presbyterians and your New England presbyterians; and your whole argument—with which I need not say that I agreed as far as my knowledge went—has interested me greatly in that as in other respects. . . .

March 19, 1894.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I do not see that we have anybody left with the pluck of my old Benthamite friends, who really dared to speak unpleasant truths sometimes. What with the muddle about home-rule and eight hours' bills and the devices for flattering the British public, I often feel heartily disgusted. But then I reflect that this probably means that I am becoming an old fogey, and that things have looked very black before now. My letter, I see, will not take a cheerful turn, but I feel better generally after swearing, and you must imagine that as I cease to write, I fill my pipe and take my book and feel that my mind is lightened by discharging my ill-humour on my friend. It is wrong, but it is rather my way.

Ever your affectionate,

L. S.

May 19, 1894.

To Mr. Norton.

I believe that our last letters crossed and were both occasioned by my brother's death. I was glad to read what you said about him. You anticipated my feelings, I think, very accurately. I have now undertaken a task which, in some ways, I dread—namely, to write his life. It is very difficult for me; but, having offered to do it, and my offer having been evidently pleasing to my sister-in-law, I must do what I can. Besides other difficulties, which you will understand, there is a want of available material. He burnt all his letters, and wrote few till comparatively late in life. Nor is there very much incident; and what there is is, in part, of or belonging to the legal side of things, and therefore rather outside my knowledge. My desire is to make a portrait of him rather than a history of facts; and I have before me, as an ideal, Carlyle's 'Sterling.' It is, however, an ideal to which I cannot approach very closely; not only because I am not Carlyle, but because he was very different from Sterling. . . .

St. Ives, *Sept.* 23, 1894.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . Here I am coming to the end of my holidays and looking forward with some dread to the task that awaits me at home. I cannot think how I shall get through it. I have very abundant materials for the early years of my brother's life, but in the later part I shall be on difficult ground in speaking of his legal career. That of itself is rather awkward; but another more perplexing matter is the relation between us. Boswell showed his genius by setting forth Johnson's weaknesses as well as his strength. But if Boswell had been Johnson's brother? I cannot be simply eulogistic if the portrait is to be life-like; but I shall find it very hard to speak of defects without concealing my opinion that they were defects, or, on the other hand, taking a tone of superiority and condescension. By 'defects' I mean rather limitations. I never knew a

stronger man than my brother in the directions in which he was strong or a man whose strength had such sharp boundaries. . . . So farewell for the present. When I have taken my plunge into old letters and books and papers I shall have very little time to write. I must, according to my custom, finish the thing off without attending to anything else, and I shrink till the spring is made.

Dec. 23, 1894.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I am still deep in my brother's Life. I have written a large part of it, and shall probably finish it in another five or six weeks. For reasons which, I guess, I must have explained, it is about the stiffest piece of work I ever undertook. It will, however, have the merit of shortness. Lives are really becoming overpowering. Old Pusey—the smallest of human beings—has, I think, four monstrous volumes, discussing baptismal regeneration and the like. It makes one ashamed of the intellect of the race. An old beggar who believed that the prophet Daniel read the *Times* newspaper (as the showman put it) ought really to have been shuffled out of the way as quickly and quietly as possible. There are two volumes about Dean Stanley, principally to show that he acted as personal conductor to the Prince of Wales. . . .

I don't mind writing books; what is loathsome is publishing them. It seems to me indecent almost, though I admit it to be necessary. I wonder whether other people hate the trade as much as I do. If one could write to one's friends alone, it would be tolerable; but to go to the world at large and say 'Come, buy my remarks' shows a want of modesty or even common propriety.

30 *Janvier*, 1895.

To M. Loppé.

Je pars demain pour les montagnes—de Wales malheureusement J'ai travaillé à mon livre sans perdre un jour,

mais je n'ai pu le finir qu'aujourd'hui. J'ai besoin de me reposer, mais il faut recommencer dans dix jours et ce serait un peu tard pour aller vous rejoindre. . . . Vous devez avoir un bien bel hiver aux Alpes, si vous avez le même temps que nous avons à Londres. Tout est couvert de neige et la Serpentine est une petite Mer de Glace. . . .

April 19, 1895.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . [Sir Alfred Lyall's] 'Eastern Studies' is, I think, the most interesting work of the kind I ever read. . . . When I came back from America last time, I made a reputation on board by reciting one of [his] poems—*Theology in Extremis*—at a sort of penny reading. All the passengers thought that I had written it, and some added that I was the hero—a gentleman who is supposed to be caught in the mutiny and allowed to choose between death and conversion to Mahommedanism. I have never been the object of so many delicate attentions before or since, and gave my autograph to a dozen ladies. However, independently of that, Lyall is a man worth knowing, and, unluckily, so popular in society that I don't often get a chance of seeing him. So I have gained by his illness.

I have read two books lately which have interested me. . . . The other book is A. J. Balfour's 'Foundations of Belief,' which are, I think, about the very oddest foundations that any man ever tried to lay—being chiefly reasons for believing nothing. I preached a kind of sermon about it to the Ethical Society here, taking his arguments and working out their proper result. It will, I believe, appear in the *Fortnightly* for June;[1] but it is not worth while taking the trouble to read. The thing is really too obvious. . . .

Another book, by the way, worth a glance is a collection of old S. T. Coleridge's letters. I had to write the beggar's life [in the Dictionary], and have a kind of morbid familiarity with his history, which makes me appreciate better than

[1] 'The Vanity of Philosophising' in 'Social Rights and Duties,' vol. ii. 183.

some people his amazing wrigglings and self-reproaches and astonishing pouring forth of unctuous twaddling. After all, Carlyle's portrait of him has done the thing unsurpassably; and it is impossible to add much to it. But there are some delicious bits in this. . . .

Stephen had by this time become interested in the work of the Ethical Societies, and to them he gave various lectures, some of which were published in two volumes entitled 'Social Rights and Duties.' A critic has remarked that Stephen 'never wrote better than when he was writing a lecture. The idea of the audience seemed to exhilarate his fancy and to give more outlets for his humour.'[1] That, perhaps, is true, but it is, I think, hardly correct to see in this a proof that his mind remained in some things 'curiously academic' after long absence from Cambridge. His lectures at Cambridge in the old days were, if tales be true, curiously unacademic, though mathematical. The truth is, I take it, that he had a bit of the orator in him and liked to feel that an audience was following his words. As he rose in the literary world he was, like other 'public characters,' called upon to make some public speeches, and two of them deserve a moment's notice. I owe to Mr. Edmund Gosse an account of a sight he saw, but I did not see.

'In the summer of 1893 a statue of Henry Fawcett was presented by Sir Henry Doulton, and set up in the new park at the back of Lambeth Palace. It was not a regular public ceremony, but Sir Henry's people collected in the park, and Archbishop Benson was to unveil the statue. I went with the Bensons, and we found Leslie Stephen there and one or two other people. It was a brilliant summer day, blazing, without a cloud. Leslie Stephen had not, I believe, intended to speak, but the Archbishop asked him to do so. We sat on a scaffolding between the statue above us and the park below, and when L. S. rose to speak, he stood up silhouetted against the burning blue sky, with a tremendous light upon him.

[1] Mr. Herbert Paul's essay at the beginning of 'Free-thinking and Plain-speaking' (1905), p. 59.

It was exactly like a Holbein—the magnificent head, with its strong red hair and beard, painted against the porcelain-blue sky. I never in all my knowledge of him saw Leslie Stephen to such physical advantage. He was full of emotion, occasionally shaken by it, but he rose above it; and he seemed like a prophet raised half-way to heaven, high above the people. The scene will always remain with me as one of the most picturesque that I was ever present at.'

I have not Mr. Gosse's art of making a picture with words. Nor have I the art of our dear Mrs. Mountstuart Jenkinson, who 'painted the sunken brilliancy of the lean long-walker and scholar at a stroke' by 'He is a Phœbus Apollo turned fasting friar.'[1] The fasting friar I have often seen; but there were, even in my time, moments when the sun-god gleamed forth in splendour, though perhaps he came rather from Walhalla than from Olympus. Novels, however, 'are not evidence,' and, for myself, I dare do no more than endorse Mr. Gosse's judgment that Stephen praising a friend aloud and to his heart's content was a goodly sight to see.

It is always dangerous to print a detached peroration; but there is much of Stephen in the words that follow.

> And now let me thank Sir Henry Doulton for his gift to the public, and thank him, if I may, for a special personal reason of my own. . . . I always associate Fawcett with a garden. He loved a garden because he could there take the exercise in which he delighted without the precautions necessary for a blind man in public places. He loved it because he heartily enjoyed the sweet air and the scent of flowers and the song of birds. He loved it because he could, as the Archbishop has reminded us, enjoy even the sights, the sky and the trees, through the eyes of others. He loved it not least because a garden is the best of all places for those long talks with friends which were among the greatest pleasures of his life. The garden where I oftenest met Fawcett, and where I have talked with him for long hours, never clouded by an unkind word, is the garden of

[1] 'The Egoist,' chap. ii.

an old Cambridge college, with a smooth bowling-green and a terrace walk by the side of the river, and a noble range of aged chestnut trees and the grand pinnacles of King's College Chapel looking down through the foliage. Fawcett loved that garden well; he would have loved this; he resented any encroachment upon it as if it had been sacred ground; but he would have loved this better, and guarded it with greater zest, had he known that it was to be dedicated to the healthful recreation of the people among whom he lived. I like to think of this garden with his statue in the centre, and to hope that many of the people who come to find a refuge here from the crowded London streets will associate with innocent pleasure the form of my old friend who once fought their cause so well.

And now let me close by once more thanking Sir Henry Doulton for his gift, and expressing my conviction that he will never, for a moment, regret it; for he will know that he has been doing honour to the man who deserves it; to a man who gave his whole powers to raising the spirit of independence and defending the rights and best interests of his fellows; to a man who struggled victoriously against a terrible calamity, and even made it a source of strength; to a man who never harboured an unkind thought or forgot the humblest of friends; to a man to whom his most determined antagonist—and he had many antagonists though no enemies—could even for a moment attribute any mean or ungenerous action in a life of political warfare; to a man who never shrank from uttering what he thought, and who raised no resentment by his utterance because he had no feelings to express which did not do him honour; to a man who never condescended to flatter, and who won respect and affection by saying to all men not what he thought would please them, but what he was profoundly convinced would be for their good to hear. Such a man in these days, as in all days, deserves to be kept in remembrance; and it is with pleasure and gratitude that I attend the unveiling of this monument, so well

calculated to preserve a memory very noble and especially dear to me.[1]

Of Fawcett's virtues Stephen was ready to speak aloud, always and everywhere : they were a theme for open spaces. It was a different matter to rise in the Chapter House at Westminster and say the just word of Lowell, and the duty fell unexpectedly upon Stephen as Mr. Arthur Balfour was detained by illness. But it will, I think, be admitted that the right man spoke, though with faltering voice. One marked characteristic of the speech was severe self-repression. Stephen had a tender literary conscience. What he wrote to Mr. Norton about Lowell's poetry shows what I mean.[2] He cannot be charged with 'inverse partiality.' If he reviewed the work of a young friend, that young friend had no penalty to pay for friendship ; but if anything was to be said of a man of Lowell's rank in the world of letters, neither public ceremony nor deep emotion would betray Stephen into a phrase unmeet for an affidavit filed in the High Court of Criticism. In this case praise could be liberally bestowed with absolute sincerity ; but it was praise without superlatives. The happiest moment for the speaker himself, no doubt, came when he could cast his burden on Lowell's self and declaim some sixteen lines of verse—those which begin thus :

> Come, Peace ! not like a mourner bowed
> For honour lost an' dear ones wasted,
> But proud to meet a people proud,
> With eyes that tell o' triumph tasted.

Stephen could feel, as few of his hearers could, the old thrill of the crusade against 'the gigantic curse of slavery.' He had won the right to feel it. But our only quotation shall come from a different part of his speech.

[1] I have to thank Mrs. Fawcett for allowing me to see a printed report of the speech. Whether Stephen was aware that he would have to speak I do not know. The ceremony took place on June 7, 1893, and is briefly noticed in the *Times* of the next day.

[2] See above, p. 416.

> I have said that I was one of his friends. I shall be proud to say so as long as I can be proud of saying anything. But I bethink myself that the qualities that endeared Lowell to me were the same qualities which endeared him to a wide and ever-spreading circle. There are some qualities which can be fully revealed only in the intimacy of private life—the pure and tender and gentle heart, the unfeigned delight in all the sweet domesticities of the innermost circle. Lowell had in full measure the charm which comes from such qualities, and they are happily shared by many who will never be commemorated in Westminster Abbey. They have already a better reward. But when we see such qualities combined with the highest intellectual gifts; when they are the foundation of the attractive power which bound together a far wider circle; when, above all, they are exhibited by a man conspicuous by his public position and so used as to become a bond in some degree not only between individuals but between two great nations —in such a case, I say, we are bound to show him honour by every means in our power.

This is not given as a model of rhetoric; but it is a pure bit of Stephen; and perhaps the most Stephen-like words in it are the 'in some degree' which any professor of rhetoric would cut out. There must be no exaggeration: binding great nations together is not easy work, and the most influential of us can do very little indeed. Not less characteristic are the words about 'the sweet domesticities of the innermost circle'; or again, 'They have already a better reward.' That from Stephen is not cant, but the sum alike of personal experience and ethical speculation.[1]

When making a speech Stephen was always glad to discharge a piece of poetry. Shy of displaying his own feelings, he could, as it were, throw the responsibility upon the poet.

[1] As the reports in the newspapers were condensed, Stephen wrote out this speech and sent it to Mr. Norton. A type-written copy lies before me. A fairly long report will be found in the *Times* of November 29, 1893. The Dean of Westminster, the American Ambassador, and Mr. Chamberlain also spoke.

A speech at Cambridge about Fawcett comprised much of Wordsworth's *Happy Warrior*. More than one witness has testified to the deep impression made by part of the *Grammarian's Funeral*, declaimed at a dinner of the Alpine Club when the news of Stevenson's death had just been received. *Theology in Extremis* must have been good to hear among the trivialities of an Atlantic liner.

Honours were beginning to come in. The degree at Cambridge pleased him. A photograph taken by an amateur shows him in scarlet gown and doctor's bonnet; in such habiliments he looks like some divine of the sixteenth century with a formidable turn for controversy. To succeed Tennyson at the London Library was yet pleasanter. In Stephen's case the honour must have been won by sheer merit. Beloved by a few friends, he was no 'lion' and nothing could make him lionizable. He had not written for a large public, and he had very recently spoken about religion with what many people must have thought excessive plainness. But his course, ever since he took pen in hand, had been straight; and men like to see straight running. He was, it may be added, by no means a mere figure-head of the great institution. He was a working president, deeply interested in new buildings and new catalogues and the like. 'He was an unfailing attendant at meetings of the Catalogue Committee. He frequently spent stray half-hours in the cataloguing-room looking over the slips, and when the new catalogue was finished told the librarian that he had been gloating over it all day, proud that his name was associated with such a work. In the new building he took a keen interest and used to climb about the scaffolding. There are many who will remember the speech full of dry humour which he made when the new building was formally opened.'[1] Even in his last years, one who followed Stephen through a half-built library required a steady head—*teste meipso*.

Mr. H. R. Tedder of the Athenæum, who knew Stephen well, and who gave him highly important aid when the Dictionary was being planned, has kindly contributed the following

[1] I have to thank Sir C. P. Ilbert and Dr. Hagberg Wright for this information.

lines: 'Stephen served on the General Committee of the Athenæum several times, and naturally gave his chief attention to the library. His wide knowledge of books and sympathy with every department of literature made him a valuable member of the Library Sub-Committee. I also knew him as a colleague on the Committee of the London Library, of which he became President a few years before his death. He was a most diligent attendant at meetings even when his deafness had made them irksome to him. I recall an instance of his tactful humour. As President he took the chair at an Annual Meeting of the London Library, and some question arose which was the cause of a heated exchange of words between two of the members. A third member called attention to the disturbance and asked the Chairman to stop it. "Oh," replied Stephen, "I cannot interfere in a private conversation between two gentlemen." This amusing rebuke silenced the disorderly debaters. . . . I learned in the course of many years to admire and respect him as a man, ever gentle and considerate towards others, conciliatory in dealing with thorny questions, most temperate and urbane, but firm and decisive if occasion arose. With him strong feeling never found expression in strong words. A delightful companion, never commonplace, but a master of delicate and refined irony, with a play of wit which illumined all his conversation. He never had a bad word for a fellow man or woman; he dealt gently with bores and fools; kindliness and good feeling seemed natural to him. He was the least vain, the least self-conscious, the most modest, the most lovable of mankind.' It was with reference to the Presidency of the London Library that I began to quote from Mr. Tedder; my readers, however, will not have wished me to stop.

But despite these honours, the letters from which extracts have been made are sorrowful. Their writer was suffering keenly. Lowell went; then Robertson; there was always some nursing for Mrs. Stephen to do. Then the brilliant career of a nephew, James Kenneth Stephen, the J.K.S. of 'Lapsus Calami,' was cut short[1]; and then that tower of

[1] *See* 'Life of Sir J. F. Stephen,' p. 468.

strength, Sir James Fitzjames, began to fail. In pathetic words Leslie tells how for the first time he can shake his brother's hand without feeling his own hand crushed. Then he was to write his brother's Life. It was, I think, the most painful task that he ever undertook. A far-off past was recalled, and he felt that by his own fault he and his brother had of late years drifted apart—not, indeed, in affection but in interests. Whether there was any fault at all we may reasonably doubt. Such thoughts come to us at such times, and often they are unfounded. But also Leslie's letters to Mr. Norton tell of a distressing struggle. Such is his love for his brother that he seems to think it 'brutal' to suggest that Fitzjames's powers and sympathies were subject to remarkable 'limitations,' and yet honesty, so he thought, required that this should be not only suggested, but said. I do not think that many brothers would have felt so acutely the pangs that Leslie felt, and it seems to me that the result of this self-torment was that in the end a trifle too much may have been written of the great jurist's 'limitations.' Limitations may be taken for granted in this world. Fawcett's interests and sympathies were by no means unlimited; and those who are better able than Leslie was to appraise what Fitzjames did in the field of law and legal history will wonder at the amount of vigour, industry, and literary power that was displayed by him in other provinces. However, Leslie was unhappy, and the more so because friends could not see exactly where the difficulty lay. Material having been collected, the book was rapidly written—in about three months, I think (Nov. 1894—Jan. 1895). That in general esteem it does not stand quite as high as the 'Life of Fawcett' is not, I should suppose, evidence of defective workmanship. Codes and projected codes cannot, it may be feared, be made very interesting to the generality of mankind. The preservation of open spaces is more intelligible, and the heroic courage of the blind statesman had been an admirable theme. Here, as elsewhere, criticism may be left to others; but that in the English language one brother has written of another a better book I should venture to doubt.

Blow after blow had fallen, and the worst—much the worst—was yet to come. Stephen's health had been tried and his heart had been wrung by an exacting piece of work when, on May 5, 1895, after a short illness, his wife died.

About a month afterwards he told me in a letter that after his death, which he did not think was far distant, I might see a paper that he had been writing, if I was inclined to contribute a sketch of his life to the Dictionary or to compile any notice of him. I am about to transcribe a few words from that paper, which is a brief memoir of Mrs. Stephen intended only for her children. The words are these :

> She took up only too many fresh interests and duties. She lived in me, in her mother, in her children, in the many relations and friends whom she cheered and helped. The very substance of her life was woven out of her affections. The affections, of course, brought trials. I have often thought, in reading about Swift, for example, that the saddest of all states of mind was that in which a man regrets that he has loved because his love has brought sorrow. That is 'the sin against the Holy Ghost'—to blaspheme your best affections, which are your Holy Ghost. . . . Deep as was her grief [for a sister], it, like all her grief, became transmuted into affection for the survivors. . . The article in my 'Hours in a Library,' which seems to have given most pleasure, judging from what I have heard, is one upon 'Wordsworth's Ethics.' I mention this because you will find in it the fullest comment I can give upon this transmutation. Grief, I have said in substance, is of all things not to be wasted. . . . The love of a mother for her children is the most beautiful thing in the world. . . .

A sympathetic observer of Stephen's 'mountain worship' has written thus : 'One is tempted to think that Stephen found an outlet in Alpine enthusiasm for the transcendental or mystical emotions which other men expend, according to their character and surroundings, on religion, speculation, art, or devoted human affection, and that, for this reason, he

was the better able to dispense with any such element in his philosophy.' That does not, I think, quite hit the mark; at least, I should not construct the cathedral in just that fashion. Devoted human affection was for head and heart the one thing needful. The majesty and mystery of the mountains make the best of backgrounds. In the foreground are mother and child. They wear no haloes, and are in no wise superhuman; but their love is the holy spirit: the holiest that we know. However, the 'Agnostic' has written and has lived his own apology.

At St. Ives a Nursing Fund has been established in memory of Mrs. Stephen. 'I cannot,' wrote a lady to Leslie, 'count the times when in the small, dingy, and crowded quarters of St. Ives her name was mentioned with affection and fervent gratitude.' Another memorial is a lecture on 'Forgotten Benefactors' delivered to an Ethical Society in the autumn of 1895.[1] One who heard it says that it was deeply impressive. It should be read by all who would know Leslie Stephen intimately.

Yet a line has to be added, and perhaps the saddest line of all. His step-daughter, Miss Stella Duckworth, was married in April 1897 to Mr. J. W. Hills, and died in July, when she was but twenty-eight years old. No words could tell how beautiful was the care that she took of him and his children after her mother's death. 'She was,' wrote Stephen, 'as unselfish as a human being could ever be; and during the last two years has been devoted to me and watched over me, I might almost say, like a mother.'

[1] 'Social Rights and Duties,' ii. 225.

XX

STUDIES OF A BIOGRAPHER

(1895–1902)

The time when I saw most of Stephen was the summer of 1897. We were neighbours in Gloucestershire. We were often in and out of each other's houses and took long strolls over the Cotswolds. With quiet courage he was trying, as it were, to piece together the fragments of a shattered life. The grief was much too deep for words. One word of 'consolation' from me might have strained our friendship. Had it not been for his children, he would, I think, have wished to depart. Happily the children were there, and no father could be more affectionate: indeed, about small matters he was excessively solicitous. Happily, also, it was desirable—and he felt this keenly—that he should earn money. So he went on writing lives for the Dictionary and plodding through 'the Utilitarian bog.' Those Utilitarians! I think that, on the whole, their action was 'felicific.' There are many groans to be set to their account; but Stephen was interested; a little inducement would make him talk, and, when he had once started, he would talk in the old way, though at the end came a heavy sigh and 'Well, I must do my best.'

Unpractised in the art of describing character, I would gladly say no more; but I feel that I have been putting before the public materials from which a paradox could be manufactured and yet that in truth they are not paradoxical. 'Well, I must do my best.' Let me begin with two sentences written by Mr. George Meredith after Stephen's death. 'One might easily fall into the pit of panegyric by an enumeration of his qualities, personal and literary. It would be

out of harmony with the temper and characteristics of a mind so equable. He the equable, whether in condemnation or eulogy.'[1] So Mr. Meredith, knowing Stephen well and having the whole range of the English language under his fingers, chooses 'equable.' It seems to me the right word, and yet it is bold. And the explanation is not that there is one Stephen to be seen in books, while another might be seen in the flesh. There must be no division of the person. Few writers could be less able than he was to put on and take off literary form as it were a garment.

A view of Stephen which may seem very different from Mr. Meredith's may now be given in Stephen's own words. Those words were written within a few days after his wife's death only for the eyes of her children. That being so, I do not know that I should transcribe them, were it not that similar words he may have written to friends, and, the world being what it is, such words may be raked into light when friends are dead and facts forgotten. At the same time, I do not know that I should not in any case present these sentences to the public, for although they are the utterance of a man whose grief does not allow him to see everything at its right size, they seem to me the utterance of an equable mind. 'Can you not praise the dead man sufficiently unless you tell lies about him?' so Stephen once asked.[2] He was a scrupulously honest biographer. He would have wished his own biographer to be equally honest. So I transcribe.

> I am, like my father, 'skinless,' over-sensitive and nervously irritable. I am apt also to be a little absent in mind, absorbed in thoughts about my books or my writings, and occasionally paying very little attention to what is passing around me. I have so often forgotten things that have been told me when I was more or less in this state, and declared by way of excuse that I had never been told, that it became a standing joke against me. I am inclined, too, to be often silent—'You don't know how silent you can

[1] *The Author*, April 1, 1904.
[2] 'Lord Lytton as a Novelist,' *Cornhill*, March 1873, p. 345.

be,' she says in a letter—and have spent too much time in my study. At the time of my nervous depression in particular, I became fidgety and troublesome in a social point of view. I am, I think, one of the most easily bored of mankind. I cannot bear long sittings with dull people, and even when alone in my family I am sometimes as restless as a hyena. I remember—and certainly not without compunction—with certain guests of ours . . . how I used to plunge away into my back den and leave them, I fear, to bore Julia. All this comes back to me—trifles and things that are not quite trifles—and prevents me from saying, as I would so gladly have said, that I never gave her anxiety or caused her needless annoyance.

There is some truth here, though the picture is not drawn to scale. To all who have read in these pages what Leslie's mother wrote of her youngest son—and Lady Stephen's mind was marvellously equable—it will have been evident all along that he was at times 'over-sensitive' and could be 'nervously irritable.' He knew that very well—far better than it was known to the most intimate of his friends. I have sat in the 'hyena's back-den' often enough—or rather, not often enough, for I would I could sit there now. A domesticated animal the hyena was; the most manageable of beasts; a little child might lead it. Stephen had a low flash-point; but when the flash came, it was at the worst summer lightning, and at the best a pretty shower of coloured sparks which one dodged and laughed at. If ever there was a more serious explosion, the transition from wrath to sorrow was swift and touching to behold. Sometimes it was quite unnecessary. I can speak for myself. He never said a word that caused me a moment's annoyance, not to speak of pain. Also it will be remembered that the Dictionary had given his health a rude shock, from which it never fully recovered. The enemy was kept at a distance, but was still in the field. Intensely domesticated men of letters who have broken down from overwork are, it may be feared, apt to be troublesome at times, and I cannot say that Stephen's essentially equable mind erred

when he said that he had been troublesome ' in a social point of view.' But if any one inferred from this that he was ' ill to live with,' that would be a gross blunder. He was very good to live with, though he may have required a little of that sort of management which is gladly bestowed by the affectionate upon the affectionate. There were moments at which it was important that he should not be taken seriously, and in his own household the art of laughing him back into good temper had been brought to a high degree of perfection. All the excitability, all the fidgets, seemed to belong to the most superficial stratum of his character. They were an exterior network, below which all was constant and stable.

Let me mention a few particulars. Stephen's books, especially those that were published after his hand-writing had deteriorated, swarm with misprints. A conjectural emendation of his text is always permissible : for example, you may always read ' explicit ' for ' implicit,' or *vice versa*, if the change seems to you an improvement. I have just now detected ' atavism ' masquerading as ' slavism.' He was well aware of this defect, which came home to him in long lists of errata contributed by friends ; but he said that he could not —and I think that he could not—keep his mind at the proof-corrector's level. This tells us something of his temperament. He could, however, concentrate his thoughts for a long time upon a piece of work if it was of a less mechanical kind than the detection of printer's errors. His mind worked with great rapidity, and before book or article could come back to him from the press he was thinking of something else. A mind that works rapidly soon tires. One of his friends said —so I am told—that Leslie Stephen never did a day's work in his life, and I think it true that he could not go on writing for many hours at a time. Three hours writing a day he held to be his proper allowance, and if he tried to do more, his work, so he said, fell below the mark. But then, while he ' loafed ' or ' mooned ' his mind was incessantly busy with the next day's task. In the days of the Dictionary I was struck by the burdens that he laid upon his memory. He seemed able to write complicated lives with very little visible

material. To a remark on the absence of note-books the reply was, 'But of course it's all wrong,' or words to that effect. Fatigue was a natural consequence of this procedure, and sometimes fatigue would take the form of fidgets. One book after another would be glanced at and yawned over; but all the time the brain was active, and Stephen, I think, had a marvellous power of keeping his fidgets out of what he wrote.

To pass to another trait, I would not willingly have told him that I was going to the dentist's. He would have winced, and I had been warned that dentistry was a forbidden topic. At the time of which I speak, the thought of pain was acutely —I should say abnormally—painful to him. Few people loathe war as he loathed it. Most people hate, or profess to hate, war in general; but when a war—of course, 'a just and necessary war'—occurs, they find consolations. It was otherwise with Stephen. He would have condemned as utopian nonsense much that in our intervals of peace is said of war in general; but when a war was raging, he would walk out of his way to escape the sight of newspaper posters with their 'killed' and 'wounded' or he would lie awake at night thinking of the revolting horrors of a battlefield. Yet the man in whose hearing the dentist was not to be mentioned would receive his own death sentence with the coolest courage, and any of his friends who had to face 'a bad five minutes in the Alps' or elsewhere would have been wise to choose him for a companion. Nor certainly did he allow his vivid realisation of imagined pain to prevent him from 'looking ugly facts in the face' when he was making his estimate of the world. The ugly facts were for him painfully ugly—they had no sort of fascination for him—but if they were there, he would gaze at them steadily and take their measure. And then as to the sensitiveness to criticism, I suppose that it existed since he mentions it in some of his letters; but never once did he show it in my presence, and never have I seen in his intimate letters one word that betrays resentment against any particular critic [1] or envy or jealousy of any writer

[1] Unless the letter given on p. 452 is to be considered an exception.

—or, indeed, of any man. From that pettiness which often accompanies a sensitive temperament he was absolutely free. 'He was always magnanimity itself,' says Mr. Sidney Lee, and many others could say the same. If I knew of literary feuds in which Stephen was engaged, I would relieve this placid record by telling of them. 'Ours is a dirty trade,' so a distinguished critic once said to me, and he went on to speak of the cleanliness of Stephen's hands. Mr. Meredith, if I may venture to say so, seems to me to be right. Not only as author, but as man, Stephen was equable. Not placid, not always suave, never phlegmatic, he was equable, constant, magnanimous, though the sheath of some nerves—never a very thick sheath—had been worn away by hard work and many sorrows

But then—and this was not a superficial stratum—Stephen was a man with unusually strong and steady affections. I have sometimes thought that there was emotion enough in him to equip two or three first-class sentimentalists. In almost the last of his books he offered a definition of sentimentalism : 'Indulgence in emotion for its own sake.' [1] How new this may be I do not know ; but it seems very good, and, at any rate, it indicates the sense in which the term is here used. If Stephen does not indulge in emotion for its own sake, that is not because he has not been tempted, but because he has manfully said his *Vade retro.* To tease him about the sentimentalism displayed in his choice of novels—not the classics but the novels of the hour—was, a lady tells me, an amusing game ; and a death—the death, let us say, of some old college friend—might, I think, transport him to the verge of the sentimental abyss, though on the verges of abysses Stephen's foothold was always sure. As already said, he never talked to me about the judgments that were passed upon his books ; but since his death I have reason to know that there was a certain kind of praise that tired him. It could be had in any quantity during his last years : he was judicious, judicial, impartial, unprejudiced, sane, sober, and so forth : in short, an automatic book-weighing machine, which worked smoothly

[1] Ford Lectures (1904), p. 160.

and gave the correct figures. I am not sure that he had much right to be disappointed, or that he was disappointed for more than a passing moment. People who rigorously refuse 'to trot out their feelings' (it is Stephen's word) must not be surprised if a good old legal maxim about the non-apparent and non-existent is applied to their case; and in a hurrying world men will not be at pains to inquire just what it is that lies deep down below your irony. Only I feel that if intellectual sanity is all that is to be seen by a leisurely reader of Stephen's critical and biographical work, Stephen's literary craftsmanship is in some way defective, or else (for a novice in criticism must leave himself a loophole) the leisurely reader should be yet more leisurely. For my own part I should say of him what he said of Thackeray. 'His writings'—at all events his later writings—'seem to be everywhere full of the tenderest sensibility, and to show that he valued tenderness, sympathy, and purity of nature, as none but a man of exceptional kindness of heart knows how to value them.'[1] Though I make this remark with fear and trembling, I am inclined to think that the cases in which Stephen as a critic does less than justice to a writer are often those in which he, rightly or wrongly, suspects that writer of being cold-blooded. However, I cannot dissociate the books that I read from the man whom I knew.

My meagre power of description I am glad to eke out by borrowing from Dr. A. W. Ward. 'Leslie Stephen, who never wrote either a meaningless or an intentionally unfair word, never spoke a vapid or an unkind one. The personal charm which clung to him to the last, and which those who knew him will recall by means of many a sage or subtle passage in his books, was compounded of elements which it might be difficult to exhaust in enumeration, but which were certainly derived in part from the spirit of intellectual freedom, and in part from the spirit of human kindness.'[2] If readers who know him only in his writings do not perceive the presence of those two spirits in well nigh every line, then his favourite

[1] 'Thackeray's Writings' in vol. 24 of the 'new and cheaper edition' of Thackeray's 'Works,' p. 362.

[2] *Manchester Guardian*, Feb. 23, 1904.

dictum that ' a man is always better than his books,' is true in at least one instance.

Stephen in his last years spent many hours in playing ' patience '—patience of sorts. The deafer he grew the more patience he played. It was supposed to be, and I think that it really was, a valuable sedative. Still Stephen playing patience was, not only a sight to see, but if his luck was bad, a sound to hear. Another sight I remember, for I have often seen it : Stephen sitting in an arm-chair with some favourite book in one hand while the other twists and untwists a lock of hair at one side of the head. Hair and beard are thin ; every trace of harshness has disappeared from the face, but not every trace of that 'fanatical enthusiasm,' of which the essay on Rowing speaks. He does not look much like a ' judicial ' critic of that book ; but he does look very much like Don Quixote—as noble a Don Quixote as painter could wish to see. And there is another look. The blue eyes wander round appealingly from child to child, for he cannot hear what they are saying, and wants to know why they are laughing. The little joke, or whatever it is, must be shouted into his ear or he will not be content.

What he gave to the world during his last period may now be briefly stated. It is a brave tale : two volumes of lectures on ' Social Rights and Duties ' (1896) ; ' The English Utilitarians,' in three volumes (1900) ; four volumes of ' Studies of a Biographer ' (1899 and 1902) ; the ' Letters of J. R. Green ' (1901), strung on a biographical thread ; a life of George Eliot (1902) among the ' English Men of Letters ' ; a life of Hobbes in the same series (1904) ; and the Ford Lectures on ' English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century ' (1904). There are yet other essays not collected : for example, an article on Bishop Butler in reply to Gladstone,[1] an article on Lowell in the *Quarterly*,[2] and the ' Early Impressions ' ; and there are various notices of departed friends—James Payn,[3] John Ormsby,[4] George Smith,[5] Henry Sidgwick,[6]

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, Dec. 1895.
[2] *Quarterly Review*, July 1902.
[3] Introduction to Payn's ' Backwater of Life.'
[4] *Alpine Journal*,' xviii. 33 (1896).
[5] *Cornhill*, May 1901.
[6] *Mind*, New Ser. x. 1 (1901).

James Dykes Campbell,[1] James Porter[2]—which are a highly characteristic part of Stephen's work. Certainly he was not idle. He was not idle enough. In 1900 there was a slight return of the malady which had deprived the Dictionary of its first editor.

He was a good, though a somewhat hostile, critic of his own books, if he thought them worthy of criticism. When in private letters he mentions a fault, it can generally be found. The Utilitarian book was much too long upon the stocks. Thought of at intervals for eighteen years, worked at for eight years, it was always being pushed aside by disaster, by sickness, or by the loss of friends whose lives were at once to be written. Meanwhile the plan of the book was subject to change. Stephen wanted to do so much in so small a space. There was to be biography; there was to be a background of social movement; there was to be a statement of philosophical, political, economical doctrines, and then those doctrines were to be criticised and rectified. Then Stephen, sick and weary, began hacking and hewing and deleting. Good as it is, the book in my judgment would be twice as good if it were half as long again; and when critics say that this or that part of it is 'perfunctory' or 'scrappy,' I fancy that the context went to the flames. But, at any rate, Stephen managed to keep low spirits out of the book, and gave us excellent portraits, pithy statements of doctrine, convincing arguments, and much good humour. As to the 'Studies of a Biographer,' which some good judges place above the 'Hours in a Library,' they appear in Stephen's correspondence merely as 'magazine twaddlings,' which he has 'swept up' because a step-son wishes it. And that, I think, really was Stephen's feeling. The time had come when he was being told in the newspapers that he was 'the first of English critics,' and so forth; the 'George Eliot' in particular brought a chorus of praise. He could not but know that his position among English men of letters had become quasi-decanal, and during the last three years of his life he derived, I think, no little pleasure from the

[1] Prefixed to a reissue of Campbell's 'Life of Coleridge' (1896).

[2] *Cambridge Review*, Oct. 18, 1900.

respect and affection that were shown him by some of his younger fellow craftsmen; but no more humble-minded dean ever took his stall in choir and chapter, and no critic ever thought less highly of the critic's profession. He liked a little praise—perhaps he liked it more than he knew; but the butter had to be very fresh, or fair the hands that held the lordly dish. Honours poured in. He was an honorary doctor of Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh and Harvard. Once more he was a fellow, an honorary fellow, of Trinity Hall. He was especially grateful for the kind manner in which the Ford Lectureship at Oxford was pressed upon him. It was, if I may say so, a very proper recognition of the fact that he was a distinguished historian. All this helped to cheer him; but by far the most cheering influence was that of his children, who by 1900, were becoming companionable and even beginning to take care of him. Before the end they stood *in loco parentis*. Of second childhood there can be no talk; his intellect was strong to the last; but he needed a little mothering. However, we must go back to 1895.

June 28, 1895.

To Mr. Norton.

My very dear Friend,—all the dearer because I have so few real friends left. I have had your two kind letters, and will answer shortly.

I can imagine nothing that would be more soothing to me than to sit and talk quietly with you. But it is more than ever impossible for me to leave home—my desolate home! My one plain duty and my one hope of regaining a tolerable state of mind is to do all I can for her children. I must devote myself absolutely to that: must teach the girls, and be with the boys in their holidays, and keep up the bonds which unite me to the elder children. They are all I could wish to me; but I feel it essential to keep them as close as I can. Therefore I shall not leave this, except for the holidays, which I am to spend at Freshwater. . . .

Oct. 9, 1895.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I am back at my work and slowly putting on my old harness. . . . I have nearly finished revising some lectures which I promised to publish, and which I have made up my mind to complete because she was interested in them.[1] They are of no great value even in my estimation, but I may as well get them done. I am also taking up my everlasting book about Bentham, Mill, &c., and find it troublesome to revise my old thoughts or take any interest in them. However, it gives me something to do—indeed rather too much, for I foresee a terrible quantity of work—say, a couple of years. Then I have some Dictionary articles to write. Did I speak to you of my old friend, Dykes Campbell, who died rather unexpectedly last June? He was a thorough Scot—a breed which I like—the most jovial and friendly of men—a retired merchant without much more than the usual middle-class education, but a scholar by nature. He had taken to getting up Coleridge and Lamb, &c., for his amusement, and knew more about Coleridge biographically and bibliographically than anybody living, or than any two people. He had a genuine instinct for minute investigation of facts, and had as well plenty of humour and Scottish shrewdness. I used to like a chat with him as much as any amusement of the kind. He is a real loss to me. . . .

Dec. 21, 1895.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . Have you read Mat. Arnold's letters? Some, I see, are addressed to you. I think, as you will, that they have published a great deal too much of the merely every-day letter, which is a pity. The thing, however, which struck me most was the immense seriousness with which M. A. took his own vocation. He really seems to have thought not only that he was a first-rate author, which I do not dispute—at least if 'first-rate' be interpreted a bit liberally

[1] 'Social Rights and Duties.'

—but that he was going to form the minds and beliefs of the British public. Considering how stupid he thought them, that shows a marvellous estimate of his own powers. Well, it was no doubt a pleasant illusion and enabled him to do his best. But it also seems to show an odd want of a sense of humour. I always took his adoption of the oracular tone—the 'We' have said so and so—to be intended playfully and ironically. But he speaks in the same tone even to his sister and his wife. I can imagine old Carlyle taking himself to be a prophet, as indeed he was; but Mat. Arnold, I should have thought, was too much of a critic, even of himself, to wear his robes so gravely.

Jan. 1, 1896.

To Mr. C. F. Adams.

I received a few days ago a notice of my election to be a corresponding member of the Mass[achusetts] Historical Society. I wrote an acknowledgment to the secretary; but I am very glad to have the opportunity of saying to you personally that I really value this proof of kindly recognition from your members. It is over thirty years since I first saw Boston, and in many ways I have had constant cause for remembering that visit, and being thankful for the friendships which I trace to it. Lowell and Norton were ever afterwards among my best friends, and I feel now that if I could be dropped down at your Cambridge, I should feel myself more at home than in any other place outside London, except my own Cambridge. Any proof that Cambridge and Boston think kindly of me has therefore a special value. . .

You speak of your own feelings when you were threatened by such a calamity as has wrecked my life. The blow which struck me came without warning or preparation; I am glad to think that my beloved wife never knew that she was leaving me and her children. I was crushed and in some important ways feel that I can never again be what I was. I have not only lost unspeakable happiness, but have lost interest in life generally. Still my health is pretty good,

and I am taking to work, whether of any value or not. I have too the great tie to life of children, the eldest (of my own) just developing into man-and-womanhood, while hers, my step-children, are living with me, and as good to me as if they were my own. Therefore I have the strongest call upon me to take life as bravely as I can; for to them at least, I can do some service. Practically I have become a recluse; I have never joined much in society; and henceforth I shall see less of it than before. But I am a recluse surrounded with a family of the warmest affection; and, so long as that is the case, I should despise myself if I could not make something of the fragmentary existence left to me. . . .

I do not feel able to speak of the hideous war-scare which has come upon us.[1] What I think is too obvious to be repeated, and the subject is inexpressibly painful to me. The last news seems to be rather better.

April 1, 1896.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I told the publishers to send you two volumes of stupid lectures of mine.[2] You are not to read them, except the last lecture,[3] which I should like you to read. I doubted whether to publish it, for it is in the nature of a personal confession; but for the same reason it may have some interest for a personal friend. . . .

Hindhead House, Haslemere,
Aug. 31, 1896.

To Mr. Edward Whymper.

My dear Whymper,—Your 'Guide to Chamonix' has just turned up at this place where I am spending a holiday in Tyndall's house, and ought, I suppose, to be feeling specially Alpine. The book seems to be in every way excellent, and has recalled some old associations. I opened

[1] The prospect of a war between Great Britain and the United States over the Venezuelan affair.

[2] 'Social Rights and Duties.'

[3] 'Forgotten Benefactors.'

—to my surprise—on a portrait of myself, which presents me as I was over thirty years ago.[1] I don't know whether I have changed as much in appearance as in myself. If I have, it cannot be very faithful at present, for I can scarcely believe myself to be the same person who crossed the Col des Hirondelles. However, I was glad to be reminded of the pass and of my old self, and I can see that you have at least lost nothing of your knowledge or of your power of using it. I was invited to join Wills and Loppé at Chamonix at the end of September to celebrate Wills' 50th anniversary as a climber; but for many reasons was unable to go.

Oct. 9, 1896.

From A Family Chronicle.

And now comes the death of G. du Maurier, whom I have known for many years, and who was kind to me last summer. I told him (truly) that the first book that I could read with a certain pleasure after my loss was 'Trilby.' I think because it expresses in a touching way the dwelling on the old days, which is now my least painful mood. Old Mrs. Darwin, too, has just gone, who in former times received me kindly at Down—a calm, sweet and bright old lady, whom I liked because I had a special reverence for her husband. . . .

April 9, 1897.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . Of other books, I have got on my table William James's new essays.[2] They look bright, like all his writings. He is the one really lively philosopher; but I am afraid that he is trying the old dodge of twisting 'faith' out of moonshine. Well, I always like him, though I have not had time to read him. Another book is Jowett's 'Life,' which I have read with a good deal of interest. It is too long and too idolatrous; but seems to give one on the whole a good account of the man. I tried to learn from him in my time how to be a good Christian by giving up all the

[1] *See* above, p. 104.

[2] 'The Will to Believe,' by William James, 1897.

creeds and deciding that there is no absurdity in holding contradictory beliefs. That is too wearisome now, and Jowett seems himself to have had an inkling of the hopelessness. But he was a very excellent college don of a type which is rather going out. They have been so fussy in reforming the universities that the pleasant old quiet life has become impossible, and they seem to spend their whole time tearing round to 'syndicates,' and agitating for the admission of women. They have cleared away a good many abuses; but they are still in a state of bubbling fermentation which, I hope, may settle down some day. My sister is now settled at Cambridge and my sister-in-law [Lady Stephen] in the neighbourhood. My niece is married to . . . [a] legal antiquarian. So I have a good many calls there and dip into the place at intervals. I like it well enough to wish that they would make me head of a house, which is one of the pleasantest sinecures still extant; but I have as good a chance of an archbishopric! . . .

Dec. 5, 1897.

To Mrs. Herbert Fisher.[1]

[The study of Thackeray's life] makes me ashamed of myself when I worry—for I am at least far better off than he was. You would tell me, I know, that I have no call to be ashamed of myself. Well, I had a letter from a man the other day who said that he was pleased at the approval of one—myself, to wit—for whom he had so profound a respect. But. he added—I suppose from a twinge of conscience—'I have totally forgotten what was the ground of my respect—certainly not your reputation.' What he meant I don't know; but I fancy that some other people, if they were candid, would say the same. However, I don't want you to respect me so long as you love me—for good or bad reasons. . . .

[1] Stephen had begun to write weekly letters, chiefly about his household, to his sister-in-law.

—— Vicarage, *Aug.* 22, 1897.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . [Your daughter] saw just a glimpse of this quaint, quiet little region, where I feel tempted to think a country parson of the old type must have had one of the best lots that could fall to a man. I wonder whether I should not have done well to take George Herbert or even Gilbert White for a model. And yet, I am told of one house here inhabited by an atheistic cobbler, who teases the parson, and another inhabited also by an ingenious atheistic mechanic, who solaces himself by practising with an air-gun at the weathercock on the church steeple. So perhaps my parishioners would have put thorns in my pillow. What I like is the calm, which is soothing. . . .

Dec. 15, 1897.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . X. is setting up as a publisher. He is so keen about it that I hope that he will get on; and yet, as I am not of a sanguine turn, I am rather doubtful. I have always wondered, though I am an author, how publishers manage to live, and just now British publishers seem to have got into a special mess. The effect of the authors' combination seems to be that popular novelists get enormous prices, and no other books make a decent profit. Did you ever read A. B. or C. D.? Do people read them with you? I have never read a line of C. D., but, from all I hear, she writes rubbish, and I have read enough of A. B. to know that he is a poor creature. Your friend, Rudyard Kipling, seems to be the best of the lot. He has both popularity and genius; but I don't keep myself up with the rest of them. Therefore I may try to hope that they deserve all they get; and if so, they must be very deserving people. We poor 'philosophers' have to find our reward elsewhere: which is all suggested by the reflection that if poor X. does not speculate in a popular novelist, he will have to be content with very small profits. What I fear most is that some charming lady of the pantheress variety will beguile him

into accepting her works. It is a mercy that I never tried business. I should have cut my throat long ago! . . .

Dec. 15, 1897.

To Mr. C. F. Adams.

. . . I had not forgotten your reference to your grandfather's memoirs. . . . Personal reminiscences of old J. B[entham] are rather scarce. As you say, Mat. Arnold was justified from his point of view in calling him Philistine; but I have a taste for Philistines and think that this one did a very good stroke of work. If he and Mat. A. meet in heaven they will make it up; but perhaps the contingency is improbable.

I have read nearly all your book and have been much interested.[1] You say somewhere with great truth that those old ancestors of yours would make picturesque figures if any one would draw a thoroughly realistic portrait, and you have supplied some excellent sketches. The Antinomian business amused me. I have lately been reading about our idiotic 'Oxford movement'; and what struck me forcibly was the likeness between your town-meeting and the Oxford Convocation which voted down the Puseyites. The temper is precisely the same whether you take Puritan divines in old Boston or high-church dons in England. I quite agree, too, that the persecutions of Laud or Louis are other manifestations of the same holy zeal. Theocrats of all kinds must be persecutors. Still I think that a persecution cannot be carried on so effectually with the town-meeting machinery as when you have a Pope at the head of his priests, and I fancy that a shrewd fellow like Winthrop must have recognised that his divines were talking damned nonsense—dimly perhaps, but with results. I always fancy that if one could get to the truth, the Puritan belief in the supernatural was a good deal feebler than Carlyle represents. The man-of-business side of them checked the fanatic, and the ironsides beat the cavaliers

[1] 'Antinomianism in the Colony of Massachusetts Bay,' ed. by C. F. Adams, 1894.

as much because they appreciated good business qualities, as because they were 'God-fearing' people. . . .

I pitied your poor young friend who had lost his simple style because he had been drilled to write R. L. Stevenson! —and will try to point the moral some day, *or* hand him over to some one who knows more about writing English than I do—who never even learnt it. . . .

April 3, 1898.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . My greatest helper has been and is [Mrs. Richmond] Ritchie—the most sympathetic and sociable of beings that ever lived, as I often think. She is bringing out a new edition of her father's works with certain 'biographical prefaces,' including many new letters, &c., and really, as I think, very interesting. I have written a Life of him for the Dictionary, which is as dry as I can make it, but intended to serve as a kind of table of contents to her quasi-biography; and I hope to keep her dates and facts a bit straight. Her writing is very charming in every other way, but does want a skeleton of matter of fact statement. . . .

Jan. 22, 1899.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . My friends are scarce, though some are very kind, none kinder than Bryce, with whom I spent last Sunday. I had the honour the other day of proposing him as President of the Alpine Club—a position from which I retired about thirty years ago. It was queer enough to go to the old place and feel that I was regarded with curiosity like a revived mammoth out of an iceberg. . . .

Ringwood, *Aug.* 19, 1898.

To M. Gabriel Loppé.

Mon cher Loppé,—Je n'ai presque jamais reçu une lettre qui m'a donné tant de plaisir que la vôtre—J'écrirai en Anglais pour m'exprimer plus facilement et Mme. Loppé vous aidera, s'il y a des phrases obscures.

Your letter charms me because it is the proof of a cordial friendship, for which I cannot be thankful enough, and of a sympathy now more than ever valuable. I cannot now accept your most friendly invitation. . . . You know my sorrows. I have never got over my great loss, and my illness now is partly due to the fact that I have taken no holiday since. I worked in order to distract my mind from painful thoughts and at last broke down under the strain. I have now had a long rest, and am in many ways much better. Still my sleep is uncertain, and I cannot take even a little walk without spoiling my nights—a fact which would interfere with my enjoyment of Chamonix. Besides my great trouble, I have lately lost some of my best friends and feel the solitude. I ought, for the sake of my children, to go a little more into society, but my deafness has become so much worse that I can take no part in conversation. I hear not a word when two or three people are talking, though I can talk to one person alone. All this tends to make me very sad and lonely. Meanwhile I have one great comfort. My children are all well and growing up as I could wish. . . . My wife's two sons are as good to me as if they were my own, and my home is therefore in many ways a happy one—even now. Anyway I must keep up my courage and make the best of it. . . .

Jan. 3, 1899.

To Mr. Thomas Hardy.

I have to thank you for the 'Wessex Poems,' which came to me with the kind inscription, and gave me a real pleasure. I am glad that you remember me as a friend. I am always pleased to remember that 'Far from the Madding Crowd' came out under my command. I then admired the poetry that was diffused through the prose; and can recognise the same note in the versified form. If only for that reason, the poems would be welcome. I will not try to criticise or distinguish, but will simply say that they have pleased me and reminded me vividly of the old time.

I have, as you probably know, gone through much since

then. I have had more happiness, I think, than the great majority, and very great sorrows of late. I am trying to settle down to pass the fag-end of life as well as I can; and I have sufficient reasons for accepting my lot without whining. Years go by so quickly now that I shall not feel the time long. Yet it is rather hard to accept the obvious truth that most of one's happiness must be in looking back. . . .

I wish you all that is appropriate to a new year. I have just remembered that my father was born 110 years ago to-day, and feel as if I had lived a century myself.

Feb. 2, 1899.

To Mr. C. F. Adams.

. . . But I am rambling. I meant to speak of your paper.[1] It interested me as bringing out what I surmised in a general way, viz., that the singular change which has come over British opinion is equally manifest with you. The people who still call themselves liberal here disavow all the doctrines which used to be called liberal in my youth. Cobden and Bright and J. S. Mill and all the old idols have been deposed, as much at least as you have departed from Washington's foreign policy, &c. I fancy that the change is explicable from the cynical point of view. What people call their 'principles' are really their pretexts for acting in the obviously convenient way. When our trade wanted only peace, we were ready to be Quakers. As soon as we find ourselves competing with powerful nations, we find out that quakerism is mean and cowardly. The fact is that we have been brought close together before we are civilised enough to behave accordingly. I often remember an uncle of mine (Stephen on Pleading) who had two big dogs and thought to make them friends by making them feed together. Unluckily, they both went to the same dish—with the natural consequences. So England and France have come into contact in Africa with similar results.

[1] Probably 'Imperialism and the Tracks of our Forefathers,' by C. F. Adams, 1899.

Annihilating time and space too quickly does not make lovers but enemies. . . .

June 2, 1899.

To Mr. C. F. Adams.

. . . You speak of appropriating remarks of mine. Well, if you have done anything of the sort, I am most sincerely flattered; and, moreover, you have more than amply paid your debt by your very kind references to me. I did not even fancy that any competent person would think so well of me and I am really gratified. You ask me about Mr. A. B. He was a sub-editor, I believe, of C's paper, and boasts of being a thorough-going atheist and materialist. He dislikes me as a thorough radical dislikes a Whig and thinks me both cowardly and illogical as well as insincere. He had a special grudge against me because in that eighteenth-century book I rashly accepted certain statements about Paine's drunkenness, &c. I confessed my mistake in an article in the *Fortnightly*,[1] but he thought my confession inadequate. A friend of his corresponded with me about it, and sent me certain letters in which he exposed my various sins. I confess that I was annoyed, even more than I ought to be perhaps, but I think that he is a very able and vigorous man as well as honest. I cannot, however, share his opinion of myself!

As for Buckle, I quite agree to what you say. He was, I think, a man of extraordinary powers. The point of my article[2] (which I never republished) was (or was meant to be) that he went wrong just from not having the Darwinian clue. The stronger a man is, the further he goes in the wrong direction, once started. Moreover, I think that Buckle had predecessors enough, especially Comte, to have shown him the way to a better appreciation of 'sociology.' However, the fact is that when Buckle's book first appeared, many of my friends were enthusiastic admirers. I always had some reserves; and when a few years later I thought that his errors were becoming manifest, I perhaps was too

[1] *Fortnightly*, Aug. 1893. [2] *Ibid.*, May 1880.

eager to point them out and spoke in too flippant a tone. It is not my only sin of that kind!

I may probably have to speak of Buckle in that weary Utilitarian book. . . . I am deadly sick of the whole job. Your letter and article are specially welcome, because (if I may speak frankly) I am really in need of encouragement. I live here like a hermit; I see only a few friends; I have become so deaf that I have had to set up a trumpet, and I cannot go into society because I am a sort of non-conducting medium. . . . I must do as well as I can, and perhaps it is injudicious to say as much as I have. Anyhow the motive was good—a desire, that is, to explain how much your kind words have gratified me by showing how much I am in want of such cheering. . . .

Sept. 21, 1899.

To Mr. Norton.

I find your letter awaiting me on my return from the country. You speak of Ashfield and make me a little envious. We have been settled in the fen country. The sea was forty or fifty miles off and the house of a neighbour was (so he said) 20 ft. below high-water mark. We, it is true, were on a bit of a swelling and even spoke of going 'up-hill' from the fen, though the hill would not have been perceptible to the naked eye of a mountaineer. My climbing days are over and even my walking days are passing, and I could sit in the garden and care nothing for the outside world. . . . I don't know how it is, but, though personally sad enough, I do not take so gloomy a view of the outside world as some of my betters. I confess that things don't look very lively. As I write, we seem to be in for that wretched Transvaal business, of which no good can possibly come, which may lead to any amount of mischief, and which, so far as I can see, ought to have been avoided altogether. You have had your own complaints to make of your countrymen. It is bad; but is it worse than things have always been, or as bad? As for the wider question of democracy and so forth in general—well, it is rather too big to answer

on this bit of paper; but I have a perhaps unreasonable amount of belief, not in a millennium, but in the world on the whole blundering rather forwards than backwards. But I only state this to illustrate my state of mind; not as throwing any light on the subject! . . . My landlord [in the fens] must be a quaint parson; half his library was raw material for sermons, and the other half old sporting magazines. I read both, and could tell you all about the Derby for the last forty years just now. It was pleasant reading after a course of Utilitarianism!

Sept. 25, 1899.

To Mrs. Herbert Fisher.

. . . My book is being printed and I am finishing off the Dictionary. I went to the B. Museum on Saturday and I hope did the last bit of drudgery. I began there with Addison seventeen years ago, and now have done Young. It represents a lot of work and very little—I won't say what. Anyhow that is done for, and now I must look out for something else, and, if possible, try to make a little money.

Dec. 17, 1899.

To Mrs. Herbert Fisher.

. . . I attended a meeting the other day of a variety of learned people, Lord Acton and A. J. Balfour and Lecky and Sidgwick and Bryce and others, who are talking of setting up some kind of Institute—a Royal Society of Philosophers, &c. I begged them not to make an Academy where men of letters would crown each other. I was glad to find that they were all against that, and I don't suppose that the other plan will come to much. . . .

Jan. 15, 1900.

To Mr. T. Seccombe.

Lee has given me—I do not know whether on your behalf—a copy of your 'Age of Johnson.' It is perhaps a book of which one could only judge adequately by using it steadily. At present, I can only say that I have read enough to

augur most favourably of its utility. You seem to have turned to good account your dictionary work. I have always admired your articles there; and this manual shows the same qualities. It is thorough and sensible and gives what is wanted by intelligent readers. I think it excellent. I liked your introductory remarks upon the unlucky eighteenth century. The old phrases about it ought to have become obsolete by this time, and your remarks will, I hope, help them to disappear. I thoroughly approve and agree with the whole spirit of them.

I hardly know whether I ought to say anything of certain references to myself. Generous praise, however, is too welcome not to be acknowledged even if it be on the side of excess. I always feel that a critic is a kind of parasitical growth, and that the best critic should come below a second-rate original writer. Feeling this, and being also predisposed by my age and circumstances to distrust things in general, I have learnt to apply to my works a dictum of Mark Pattison's. To know what others think of you, take your lowest estimate of yourself in your most depressed moments and divide by three. Well, it does not much matter, but, being often in that mood, it is pleasant to find that a young comrade of your abilities can give an estimate far above that which would result from the arithmetic in question.

May 27, 1900.

To Mrs. Herbert Fisher.

Dearest Mary,—. . . My principal event this week has been the grand dinner with the P. of Wales.[1] Oh, dear! what a bore it was, and yet it was also amusing. We dined at the great new Carlton Hotel, gorgeous and specially proud of its cookery. The dinner was sumptuous —any quantity of dishes and wine, and, what especially bothered me, a pause in the middle to smoke cigarettes.

[1] 'In May 1900, in view of the completion of the great undertaking [D. N. B.] King Edward VII. (then Prince of Wales) honoured with his presence a small dinner-party given to congratulate Smith upon the auspicious event.' *See* D. N. B. Sup., vol. i. p. xlvi.

Gerald tells me that this stimulates a 'flagging appetite'—I thought it barbarous. I ate as little as I could, though I foolishly allowed myself to drink a little champagne. However, I was not much the worse for it next day. . . . Then we went out to smoke, and Lee presented me to H.R.H. He looked good-tempered and said that he remembered dear Jim,[1] who coached his son one long vacation. He also asked me whether I smoked. That was our whole conversation. He had then to talk to old A. B., and I fell into the hands of an amiable bore. Presently the Prince left, and I fled, and got upon the top of a bus, which brought me home, wondering at the whole affair. . . . There were plenty of distinguished guests—Acton and Lecky and the Bishop of London and Bryce and others, who softened the transition between us poor authors and the royalty. Well, I was dreadfully bored; but it has given me a chuckle or two. On the other hand, I felt melancholy at saying good-bye to the Dictionary. It cost a slice of my life, but has been a good bit of work, though my share in it has diminished. I don't know whether to be glad or sorry that I took it up; but I part from it with a sense that I am being laid on the shelf. . . .

Ever your loving
L. S.

Did he smoke? With the eye of faith we may see a silent but convincing answer given to the Prince's question. We watch the tall man, aged sixty-seven, who has climbed to the top of the omnibus. A hand dives into a pocket and thence extracts an ancient pipe. Is there guide in all the Alps more expert with a match in a wind? Would Melchior show more skill? So the smoke goes up; and no one will grudge the smoker his 'chuckle or two,' for, beyond a doubt, he has been 'dreadfully bored,' and, beyond a doubt, the Dictionary which 'cost a slice of his life,' was 'a good bit of work.'

[1] James Kenneth Stephen.

May 29, 1900.

To Mr. Sidney Lee.

Your Statistical Account [of the Dictionary[1]] is most interesting—to me in particular. I am surprised to find that I did so much in the way of articles. I fancied, however, that I had only missed one volume.

I have read the proof with the illusion of being once more editor. I have suggested changes of a sentence or two. . . . Do you remember a critic of the first volume who complained that I had not written a preface ?—no doubt, because he could have made that preface into a review. You will give an admirable chance to the critics of the last for a peroration ! . . .

I feel, my dear Lee, a certain sadness in all this. My state now is so different from my state when we began ; and I could preach my ' Vanity of Vanities.' It is pleasant to reflect that at any rate you and I made a friendship, and I hope that you will not let it drop. I am so easily dropped now—but I trust you fully.

July 3, 1900.

To Mrs. Herbert Fisher.

I am ashamed of myself for forgetting my Sunday letter. I stayed with [Maitland at Cambridge] as you know, and had a very pleasant quiet Sunday with him. It is long since I have had such a comfortable day of talk. . . . You saw, I daresay, the report of the Lord Mayor's lunch. They omitted my speech, which was indeed only a bit of chaff. The thing was apparently successful. On the Thursday I made an eloquent panegyric upon Sidney Lee, and presented his plate to him. To-night we are all going to a gathering of contributors at George Smith's. Then I shall feel that I have really done with the Dictionary for good, and shall be thankful. It is odd to be congratulated about the great work, and to feel that one has ceased to care a

[1] Printed at the beginning of vol. lxiii. Stephen contributed to all volumes except three, and wrote 378 articles. As regards the amount written, he and Prof. Laughton, with about a thousand pages apiece, are beaten only by Mr. Lee.

twopenny damn about it. To-day Norton came in the afternoon to take leave. He goes back to America to-morrow and I shall never see him again. It was a sad parting for I have no better friend. . . . I am delighted to hear of Charley's 'blue' and of Will's first-class. Congratulate them from their old uncle. (P.S.) I am in a hurry to be off to the Smiths. Oh dear!

FRETHAM HOUSE, LYNDHURST, *Aug.* 19, 1900.

To MR. NORTON.

. . . I can look at my life as a kind of whole and take that humorous point of view which you recommend. I feel with Sir T. Browne that my life has been a series of miracles—though I agree with Johnson that nobody else would perceive the fact. But when I recall myself in 1863, when we first met, and reflect how little I could have guessed the future, it does seem strange. Well, whatever has happened, I have had a wonderfully good time and can submit to the inevitable without much grumbling.

We are here in the middle of the New Forest, close to Rufus's death-place, and by crossing the road I get to the first scene in 'Ivanhoe'—the best beginning of a novel ever written, I think. I have even read a bit of Fenimore Cooper, which happens to be here, and felt that the Leatherstocking would be in his place in our woods. . . . So, much as my walking has decayed, I stroll out and do my bit of Jaques;—when I was at home, I was *not* in a better place—for this is really soothing and restful. The proofs will cease to pester me very soon. . . .

Sept. 2, 1900.

To MR. F. W. MAITLAND.

I have been often thinking of you, and the sad news of Sidgwick's death makes me turn to you by a natural association. I had somehow taken for granted that he was to have a year or two more life. His death gave me the more of a shock, though it is hardly surprising. I had known him for forty years; we had always been most friendly, and

it seems as if losing him was the snapping of my strongest link with the old Cambridge days. My other best friends of that time have gone, and I am now a feeble survival from the little circle which once made my most interesting world. He was such a good fellow too, and was so alive in many ways that death seems to have made a specially bad choice. He might have taken so many people who would have been less missed, and would have lost less themselves. It makes me feel older: in which it only intensifies certain other influences. . . . I don't know precisely what [these fits of giddiness] mean; but in any case they are hints telling me very clearly that it is time to be making up my accounts. Not that I can do that exactly. I have had a very happy life . . . and I don't bother about might-have-beens. At any rate, I might have been a greater scoundrel, as, I suppose, I might have been more of a saint; and I must put up with the jumble that has come of it. One ought at my age to be able to regard things from the humorous point of view and substitute amusement for remorse. That is a good edifying sentiment!

My damned book[1] is now done even to the title-page, and I have only to correct the proof of the index which the printers have had for some time. I could write a good slashing review of it. . . .

Oct. 6, 1900.

To Dr. Morgan.

I was very sorry to hear of Porter's[2] death. It is the snapping of another link between me and old days. I have written what I could [for the *Cambridge Review*] at your request. . . . Henry Sidgwick was a loss to me as to many other people. I met him at Oxford last May, when I knew nothing of his illness. I was struck by the friendly way in which he spoke to me, and was told afterwards that he had already been told of his danger. I then

[1] 'The English Utilitarians.'

[2] Dr. James Porter, Master of Peterhouse. Stephen's notice of him was published in the *Cambridge Review*, Oct. 18, 1900.

felt that it was a pathetic leavetaking in case of the worst. Poor fellow! He will be missed at Cambridge. I count up the friends left, of whom you are now the only one with whom I was very intimate. We must keep each other up. My attacks (which the doctors now declare to mean nothing very serious or more than weakness) frightened me at one time, and made me think of dying. I did not object very much. My life is so sad and lonely, except for my children, that it might cease without loss to me or any one. If I can still do some work, however, it will be bearable enough. I am cheerful in a quiet way as long as I can do something; and just now I am able to do a little. Well, I have had a wonderfully good time and must not whine. . . .

Ever your old friend,
L. S.

Nov. 4, 1900.

To Mrs. Herbert Fisher.

. . . [Some one] was begging me to write 'Reminiscences.' It is about the very last thing that I would do. I remember certain things, but what I remember best is just what I would not publish for anything. Just now I am employed in writing about my old friends, though that makes me feel painfully how little I can say of them in the way of facts. I am getting up the Sidgwick article,[1] and writing of Huxley (whose Life is just out) for the *Nineteenth Century*.[2] I have just had to write a letter to Holman Hunt to send him his portrait by Richmond, and an address from the subscribers to the same. I hope that I was civil; but I feel rather unfit for writing panegyrics.[3] People think me cold and sarcastic, and yet you know that I have some feeling; only it does not get very easily to the surface. . . . If I wrote 'Reminiscences,' I should have to speak of you and yours, and try to forget my reserve. But I could not do you justice; so don't be afraid.

[1] *Mind*, 1901, p. 1.

[2] 'Studies of a Biographer,' iii. 188.

[3] On a printed copy of this address Stephen noted that another hand had touched it, and that he was not guilty of 'the century, of which you have been an ornament.' I cannot imagine Stephen writing a phrase so suggestive of the fire-stove.

Nov. 11, 1900.

To Mrs. Herbert Fisher.

The chief news with me is, or ought to be, the appearance of my three volumes. I am surprised to find how little interest I can take in it. I dread reviews, and I dread still more the probable sense of vexation which will come to me if it causes a loss to [my publisher]. That makes me nervous. Otherwise, it seems to me as though I cared no more for the book than for anybody else's book. I know what you will say. You will speak of success and so on. Women have illusions, especially sisters, and it is a good thing for their brothers. Still their brothers know them to be illusions.

Nov. 19, 1900.

To Mr. F. W. Maitland.

. . . I am very glad that you can speak well of my book. You know, I suspect, that I am morbidly sensitive in such matters and can probably understand better than any one why I am such a fool. Just now I loathe the subject; but I will explain my blunder in two words. When I got to J. S. Mill, I went, as I think, far too much into arguing the case, and instead of keeping the 'environment' in view, as I had done in the earlier part, got too deeply into his special points. I ought to have been much shorter and more summary. Then I ought to have written a chapter to point my moral, *i.e.*, to say distinctly how far the Utilitarian doctrines required modification, and how far they are still valid. My reason, or rather the cause of this, was my weariness and sense of general weakness. I am wanting, too, in the instinct for putting myself at the right point of view for readers. That, perhaps, is partly the penalty of living so secluded a life. Well, you can apply these observations, and I shall not dwell upon them. I am able to distract myself by doing a little work. I have nearly finished 'Sidgwick,' and have written an *éloge* upon Huxley for the *Nineteenth Century*. I am a little at a loss for my next effort, but shall find something. . . .

Jan. 27, 1901.

To M. Gabriel Loppé.

. . . I went to the A[lpine] C[lub] dinner and made them a sort of farewell speech. I did not *say* that it was a farewell, but I felt that I should never go again, and only went there because I wanted my son to hear me speak there for once. It was not very cheerful, as I could not hear a sound, and such dinners are tiresome and give headaches. But they seemed to like my speech; and so I came away and felt as though I had finally dropped my connexion with the club of which I used to be so fond. This miserable war has made me unhappy, and altogether I am rather inclined to envy Queen Victoria. I hope that I shall end as quickly and easily; and happily people will not talk so much nonsense about me when I am gone. The English nation seems to be in a state of semi-insanity—but I will not speak of that. . . .

Lyme Regis, *April* 13, 1901.

To Mr. Norton

I am taking a holiday at this little place—not yet reached by railways, and still sacred to 'Persuasion.' Here I have been followed by two numbers of the *Nation*, directed in a well-known hand, and containing reviews of a certain book, which are so kind and sympathetic that they have given unmixed pleasure to me, who am, I think, the most irritable under criticism of all living authors.[1] . . . I am well enough, though a little sadder than usual. The death of my old friend George Smith means a good deal to me. He was seventy-seven, and had had a prosperous and very happy life; so one cannot say that providence had treated him badly. But he had always been so kind and cordial to me, and was so closely associated with old happy times that I miss him greatly. It seems only the other day that I was making acquaintance with Anny and Minny Thackeray at his house. Ever since he has been a good friend and a generous employer. I don't mean 'generous' in money

[1] The articles were the work of a distinguished English lawyer.

matters, though he was generous enough in that way, but in always showing confidence in me and taking his full share of responsibility. Friends are getting terribly scarce. . . .

We are here in a cottage. . . . If we had not cold winds and rain and singularly tenacious mud in every direction, it would be charming, for there are fields full of daffodils and primroses and pretty little valleys and quaint old-fashioned houses—in short a typical bit of pleasant West Country. If J. R. Green (whose letters I am editing) were here, he would find historical associations with Monmouth, Cromwell and Athelstan; the Battle of Brunanburgh, I am told, was not far off. But as I don't care a damn for the Battle of Brunanburgh and don't historically associate, this is rather thrown away upon me. . . .

June 20, 1901.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I have just finished writing my introductions to J. R. Green's 'Letters.' They are going through the press, and will, I hope, make a really charming book. He wrote admirable letters, bright and simple, and varying in mood and subject. . . . It is a pathetic story of gallant fighting against disease and difficulty. . . . He was really a very fascinating person—modern writers would say 'personality'—a word I loathe.

Then I have promised Morley to contribute to a continuation of the 'Men of Letters' series a book upon George Eliot. I find it very hard, to tell you the truth. I admire the English country novels as much as I could wish; but the later performances are not to my taste; 'Romola' bores me, and the 'poetry'—does not appear to me to be poetry. Well, I must dissemble. . . .

I happened last night to be reading Montaigne's essay upon philosophy as preparing one for death, and, though he has nothing new to say, I thought that he was giving my own sentiments. He takes his consolations out of Lucretius, as I have to take mine from Darwin; and they do as well as anything else. . . .

July 28, 1901.

To Mr. C. F. Adams.

I am just off for my summer in the New Forest, and on putting away letters blushed as I came to your last. I hope that the wrath of which you speak in it has calmed down. You spoke of the 'X' critic who took Poe and Walt Whitman for the representatives of your literature. That seems to show—pardon the remark—that you have not kept yourself posted up in the youthful British critic. Some time ago he took up the pair in question because they were both rather naughty and eccentric, and it seemed original to put them above their betters. Poe, was, I think, as Lowell said, '3 parts of him genius and 1 part sheer fudge' (perhaps '3' is too high a proportion)—at any rate, a man of genius, though he ruined it very soon. W. W. always seemed to me Emerson diluted with Tupper—twaddle with gleams of something better. But I quite agree with you that the critic was silly, or rather a young gentleman misled by a temporary 'fad'—I have written so much criticism alas! that I have acquired a disgust for the whole body of it—including my own. . . .

In the New Forest, I shall be a neighbour of A., who, I hear, is staying there in very broken health. I must go and talk pessimism to him—to cheer him up. . . .

Aug. 11, 1901.

To Mrs. Herbert Fisher.

. . . I will tell you of a compliment with which I was silly enough to be pleased. A penny-a-liner in some obscure paper quoted an article of mine in the last *Monthly* about walking,[1] and said that I was the most loved of all men of letters. I have always thought myself one of the most unpopular, and fancied that the creature must be writing sarcastically. However, he did not show any signs of that, and I can only suppose that he was eccentric. However, you must not repeat this, or I shall be thought to be silly for accepting the compliment. . . .

[1] 'In Praise of Walking,' in 'Studies of a Biographer,' iii. 254.

Oct. 20, 1901.

To Mrs. Herbert Fisher.

. . . I have finished a little article which has amused me. I prove against the people who say that Bacon wrote Shakespeare that, on the contrary, Shakespeare wrote Bacon.[1] I should be triumphant if somebody took me seriously. Now I have got to write about R. L. Stevenson, whose Life has just come out.[2] I feel nervous about it, but must do my best. I have got to work, if only to avoid unpleasanter modes of spending time. . . .

Stephen had consented to edit Green's letters at the request of Mrs. Green ('a staunch friend who has been very good to me'), and, as often happened, he warmed to work, which at the outset was not especially attractive to him. The 'antiquary' on close acquaintance proved himself to be a fascinating, courageous, affectionate man. Meanwhile Mr. Morley's 'seductions' had once more been effectual. Stephen had opened the first series of 'Men of Letters,' and was to open the second. After giving a thought to Browning and Froude, he chose George Eliot. The pleasure of transcribing a few lines that Mr. Morley wrote to Stephen in November is not to be resisted. 'I spent yesterday by my fireside, after a political pilgrimage in Scotland, in reading your "George Eliot." Seldom has any day's reading given me more real and unalloyed pleasure. The little book is a masterpiece. . . . The criticism is, to my mind, the best the world has seen for many a day, and I owe to you my first comprehension of "Middlemarch." In this region, my dear Stephen, there is no Englishman living who can touch you. It is a comfort to think of you as having undergone your full share of the varied experiences of life, and yet remaining so kindly, serene, genial, penetrating and ripe. . . . I congratulate you *vom Herzen* on a fine and most delicate piece of work.'

Having finished the 'George Eliot,' Stephen was asked to choose another 'man of letters,' and without much hesitation

[1] 'Bacon and Shakespeare,' *National Review*, Nov. 1901.

[2] *National Review*, Jan. 1902: 'Studies of a Biographer,' iv. 206.

selected 'Hobbes.' He was choosing a theme for a last, a posthumous, book.

Dec. 16, 1901.

To Mr. F. W. Maitland.

. . . I have been reading the book you recommended—the omniscient Gierke's 'Althusius.'[1] I have almost sunk into the earth from a sense of my own ignorance and my astounding impudence in writing on a subject so infinitely expansible. I resolved at one moment to take up mediæval philosophy and jurisprudence in general: Aquinas and Ockham and Suarez sounded specially attractive, and legal theories are always interesting. Happily, I remembered that a few days ago I began my seventieth year, and must be content to begin nothing. Well, I try to comfort myself with the immortal Hobbes's dictum: if I had read as much as some people, I should have been as great a fool. But then Gierke is clearly not a fool. I shall try to do the best I can, and hope to escape notice—I generally succeed in that last aim. Hobbes, *quâ* man, is delicious. Our friend G. C. Robertson was good in his way, but he looked at Hobbes too much from the philosopher's point of view, and the old gentleman's metaphysics were, I fear, very shady. . . . Meanwhile, I hardly know whether to thank or curse you for Gierke. I would thank you simply, if I could really believe that it is good to be utterly flattened and humiliated.

They made me an Oxford doctor the other day, and I made positively my last appearance in scarlet robes. I felt inexpressibly dignified when convoyed by four silver pokers; but I have sunk back to my ordinary level. I am well enough and trying to do a bit of work—anything that will distract one's mind is good for oneself, but—I will not go into the 'buts.' There are plenty of them, though while we are all well under this roof they are surmountable. . . .

[1] 'Johannes Alhtusius und die Entwicklung der naturrechtlichen Staatstheorien,' 1880: reprinted in 1902.

Dec. 13, 1901.

To Mr. C. F. Adams.

I have to thank you for some papers all of which have interested me, though I am sorry to observe from one that you were not far from me last summer without meeting me. I was near Winchester during the Alfred celebration,[1] but did not go, partly because my deafness disqualifies me, and partly from want of enthusiasm. The same paper[2] interested me in regard to the problem of international prejudices. I daresay that you are right in the main. Clearly our sense of isolation makes American sympathy valuable. I should have remarked, had I been asked to take part in the discussion, upon the futility of judgments of one nation by another. I have probably seen more of your countrymen than the great majority of Englishmen in my own class—far more than ninety-nine out of one hundred in the less educated classes, and I may claim average intelligence. Yet I feel utterly disqualified by sheer ignorance from pronouncing any general judgment upon your seventy millions. I have not the materials. What is the value of the 'judgment' of an average Briton, who has hardly ever seen an American, or read anything about him except incidental paragraphs in the paper? The opinion is a mere blind instinct varying according to accident. We feel a little better able to understand people who talk English than the barbarians who gabble French or German, and we have a vague idea that we are cousins. If we come into opposition, that makes our jealousy rather keener, and if we happen to be on the same side, makes us more friendly. The antipathy to the U.S. in 1861, &c., meant the hatred of the upper class to Bright and Cobden, who were taken to be unpatriotic as well as democratic. At present that sentiment is pretty well dead—we have 'shot Niagara'—and the 'imperialist' sentiment opposes us to Germany and France and Russia, and makes us look out for friends. Personally, I think, Americans have never been unpopular.

[1] Millenary of King Alfred. *See* 'Lee at Appomatox,' p. 263.

[2] 'A National Change of Heart,' reprinted in the volume last cited.

Perhaps we sometimes tried to be civil, by way of showing that we could show fair play to the members of an objectionable race; and, if you saw through the motive, civility of that kind might be offensive. But I have found, and I think that it is a common experience, that an American is more accessible than a countryman of my own; easier to talk to, and more amusing as a new type. However, I was so kindly received by Lowell and others long ago that I am not a fair specimen. I shall always be grateful for that, and feel kindly in consequence to the Yankee as such. Well, I am grateful to you, independently of any such considerations, for remembering one decaying and ineffectual Briton. . . .

March 5, 1902.

To Mr. J. McCabe.

The Ford Lectureship means only six lectures some time after October, and will not take up any time to speak of. I shall be very glad to read your 'Augustine' in which I am surer to be interested than I am to be able to be of any use by reading—my grammar has got twisted! Of course I shall be proud to be the dedicatee.[1] I do not like to say much of such things; but I can assure you that, though your gratitude pleases me, it makes me ashamed. I feel how very little I have done for you, though the will has not been wanting. I have thoroughly liked and respected all that I have ever known of you and your work, and wish you all success. . . . I may add as to the Ford Lectureship, that it was pressed upon me in a way which would have made a refusal appear absurd. I regret that it disqualifies me from saying, as I have lately said, that I have given up lecturing altogether; but I consider it a special case. . . .

At this time Stephen kept a sort of family chronicle. It was always tending to become, as he remarks, 'a series of obituary notices' of friends and relations. There are entries

[1] 'Saint Augustine and his Age', by Joseph McCabe, 1902. The book is dedicated to Stephen.

of another kind: 'Thoby got an exhibition at Trinity last night—the best piece of news that I have had for a long time.' 'Thoby has been to the "lake-hunt"—seeing my dear old hills.' 'Thoby weighed 13 st. 8½ lb. the other day—after lunch!' 'At the end of the holidays A. B. [a nephew] was engaged to C. D. [daughter of an old friend] much to my delight. He is . . . She is . . .' Still there is much of the necrology in this chronicle. One entry has a pathetic interest. 'Henry Sidgwick, one of my best and oldest friends taken ill, had a terrible operation, and has resigned his professorship. [*Postscript.*] He died Aug. 28 [1900]—and so breaks one of my last links to old Cambridge days.' The same fell enemy awaited Stephen—internal cancer.

In April 1902 he learnt that he was suffering from an ailment that called for surgery. At first he was advised that the operation ought to take place at once, but Sir Frederick Treves decided that it should be postponed for a while, and it was postponed until the following December Stephen knew that the operation itself would not be dangerous, but he also knew that it would be the beginning of the end. 'What I think, my dear F.,' so he wrote on April 23, 'is that I am come to the last zigzag; there is no chance of regaining any strength, as you kindly hope; every step will be down hill; but I do not know and the doctors apparently cannot tell how many zigs and zags there may be.' He faced his fate like a valiant man, and began to work at his Ford Lectures.

April 18, 1902.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . The operation is to be in a day or two. . . . I have been persuaded to give a course of lectures at Oxford after the long vacation (if I am well enough) upon my old Eighteenth Century. It is rather silly, but they were so complimentary and pressing that my vanity betrayed me. I think of the thing at odd times and am glad to have some impulse to distract me. . . .

June 12, 1902.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . As for my sentiments, you shall have them as frankly as I can give them. Who has a better right to them? [A lady] wrote some time ago to inquire into my state of mind, and said that she could not picture to herself how the future looked to me. I replied (substantially) that it did not look at all. I think little about it. In fact, hitherto my imagination has not obeyed my reason. I seem to know, but I do not habitually believe, that sentence has been passed upon me. My discomfort is trifling—not as bad as sea-sickness, at the worst, nor anything like it—and consequently it is hard to realise what I take to be the facts, and I don't see any good in trying to realise. A number of little bothers force me to attend to my state, but I can so far abstract my mind pretty completely by reading and writing. When I do think of the 'future,' it does not worry me much—hardly at all. I wake up at times in the 'horrors,' but soon doze off again, and the horrors are made of other things—fancies about my books wanting an alteration and such trifles, which look black at four in the morning. For a time I fancied that a speedy end was probable, and it gave me no trouble. I could die, it seems to me, to-morrow without being much excited about it. Why should I? I have had, as you know, a full share of such happiness as comes to very few and I should despise myself if I whined. I have often thought during this war how many thousands of lives were being cut short which had more future promise than mine. My children are all well, and will be able to get on without me. I should like to watch them further, but I am not anxious as to their future in any case. On the whole therefore I can at present take matters calmly, and I think that my chief duty almost is to leave a tolerable memory of myself to the children.

You speak of the books and articles which I write. I have to write partly because in my isolation from the outside world I can do little else, and it is best to keep one's mind at work; partly, to tell you the truth, because I am glad

to earn a little money. I have lost any illusions I may have had about the value of my work, and am content to take a modest price. But I will stick to it as long as I can.

Friends are very kind; [Mrs. Ritchie] above all—I can never say enough about her; but many others do what they can to show an affection which is very welcome. I should like to have sight of you, which, alas! is impossible; but your letter has given me a glow of warmth, and it is always a delight to think of your friendship. Well, I thought that I would make a full confession for once, and I hope that I have said enough to show you what I am thinking and feeling. I will not say more—as, indeed, I have given you a long talk.

June 22, 1902.

To Mr. C. F. Adams.

Many thanks for your volume. I have read it—not all about the Fish-Sumner business,[1] I confess - with pleasure, and, I hope, profit. The end of the Boer War, of which you speak, relieves me from a nightmare. I can walk through the streets without dodging to avoid a newspaper office for fear of some placard announcing 'disasters.' The wind-up seems, at present at least, better than one could have hoped, and I think that both sides have taken it well. There will be troubles ahead; but then I shall not live to see them. That is often a comfortable reflection to me now. I am philosopher enough to try to submit to what I cannot possibly help, and 'all history teaches'[2] that there is no use in prophesying or worrying over prophecies. Otherwise I should be often anxious about the future. I leave that to my children.

I am the more bound to limit my outlook because I have lately developed a serious mischief. The doctors have discovered a damned thing growing in my inside and

[1] *See* 'The Treaty of Washington,' in 'Lee at Appomatox and other Papers,' by C. F. Adams, 1903.

[2] In the volume just cited, p. 316, Mr. Adams had quoted with approval Stephen's dictum that 'all history teaches' means 'I choose to take it for granted.'

proposed an operation which has, however, been postponed. They wisely decline to forecast my future, but so far as I can understand, the trouble is not likely to kill me soon—but it does mean that I am to carry a burthen which will make me an invalid. I am dieted and so on, pretty strictly. Meanwhile I have no pain, though a certain amount of discomfort; and I can go on with my usual occupations. As long as I can scribble, I can at least keep myself from bothering. My little domestic circle is thriving, and therefore I have no cause for complaint.

The coronation buzzes all around me and has almost revived my boyish republicanism. Kensington Gardens is a camp, and everybody seems to be silly. I am sulky and do not feel the smallest spark of loyalty for King Edward. However, the thing will last my time, and a good deal more, and it has its conveniences. . . .

June 27, 1902.

To Mrs. Herbert Fisher.

I must send one line to you. I had settled to refuse the K.C.B., as such things are quite against my principles. But the children cried out, and I knew that you and [Mrs. Ritchie] would think my scruples absurd, so I resolved to swallow them. The thing has been taken very pleasantly by everybody, so far as I know, and I have heaps of congratulations and complimentary notices. So I have given real pleasure by my inconsistency. I am really touched by some of the letters, and at any rate feel that many people are sincerely pleased. I do not think that the King was fascinated by my smiles.

A letter came from Lord Salisbury. Would Mr. Stephen become Sir Leslie, K.C.B. ? Stephen, to use his own phrase, ' boggled over accepting the honour, not, to my mind, appropriate to the literary gent.' Also he did not know whether similar offers were being made to some ' literary gents ' whom he highly esteemed. So he wrote a letter—which was never posted, for there was a revolutionary movement in his house-

proposed an operation which has [illegible] They wisely decline to forecast my [illegible] can understand, the trouble is not [illegible] Meanwhile I have no pain, thou[illegible] My little domestic circle is [illegible]

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[illegible]

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Leslie Stephen
December 1902

hold. In full family council he yielded. The argument that carried the day, so I am told, was that if it got about that he had declined the K.C.B., people would infer that he had expected G.C.B. at the least—he who had never given such things a thought. Anyhow, like the constitutional king that he was, he yielded to the unanimous desire of the estates of his little realm. Certainly he had no cause to repent. It rained kind letters, which gave a good deal of pleasure to 'a decaying and ineffectual Briton' with 'a damned thing growing in his inside.' It has been said—and, looking back at the newspapers of the day, I think it has been said with some justice—that the honour given to the historian of the Utilitarians was of all the 'coronation honours' that which to all appearance made for 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number' of the King's subjects.[1] Why that was so I must leave the reader to decide. The question is not quite easy, for Stephen was not and could not be 'a popular favourite,' in the sense in which some other writers are, and ought to be, popular favourites. If I gave my own answer, I might without 'falling into the pit of panegyric,' say something of the public's respect—and, in the long run, love—for what is upright and courageous and sincere. The *Times* spoke of the new knight as 'a type of what is best and soundest in English letters,' and those words, I think, hit the mark. But Master Crossjay Patterne may come to my help once more. 'I like him because he's always the same, and you're not positive about some people. Miss Middleton, if you look on at cricket, in comes a safe man for ten runs. He may get more, and he never gets less; and you should hear the old farmers talk of him in the booth. That's just my feeling.' Was that not the feeling of the British public about Sir Leslie Stephen, K.C.B.? As to the 'literary gents,' I cannot imagine that one of them was jealous.

[1] Dr. A. W. Ward in the *Manchester Guardian*, Feb. 23, 1904.

XXI

THE SUNSET

(1902–1904)

Before I tell the little that remains to be told of Stephen's life a few such words as could be written only by a member of his household will be welcome. One of his daughters kindly allows me to repeat what follows.

'My impression as a child always was that my father was not very much older than we were. He used to take us to sail our boats in the Round Pond, and with his own hands fitted one out with masts and sails after the pattern of a Cornish lugger; and we knew that his interest was no 'grown-up' pretence; it was as genuine as our own; so there was a perfectly equal companionship between us. Every evening we spent an hour and a half in the drawing-room, and, as far back as I can remember, he found some way of amusing us himself. At first he drew pictures of animals as fast as we could demand them, or cut them out of paper with a pair of scissors. Then when we were old enough he spent the time in reading aloud to us. I cannot remember any book before "Tom Brown's School Days" and "Treasure Island"; but it must have been very soon that we attacked the first of that long line of red backs—the thirty-two volumes of the Waverley Novels, which provided reading for many years of evenings, because when we had finished the last he was ready to begin the first over again. At the end of a volume my father always gravely asked our opinion as to its merits, and we were required to say which of the characters we liked best and why. I can remember his indignation when one of us preferred the hero to the far more life-like villain. My father always

loved reading aloud, and of all books, I think, he loved Scott's the best. In the last years of his life, when he was tired of reading anything else, he would send one of us to the bookshelf to take down the first of the Waverley Novels that happened to present itself, and this he would open at random and read with quiet satisfaction till bedtime. He put "Guy Mannering" before most of the others because of Dandie Dinmont, whom he loved, and the first part of the "Heart of Midlothian" he admired so much that his reading of it cannot be forgotten. When my brothers had gone to school, he still went on reading to my sister and me, but chose more serious books. He read Carlyle's "French Revolution," and stopped in the middle of "Vanity Fair," because he said it was "too terrible." He read Miss Austen through, and Hawthorne and some of Shakespeare and many other classics. He began too to read poetry instead of prose on Sunday nights, and the Sunday poetry went on till the very end after the nightly reading had been given up.

'His memory for poetry was wonderful; he could absorb a poem that he liked almost unconsciously from a single reading, and it amused him to discover what odd fragments and often quite second-rate pieces had "stuck" to him, as he said, in this way. He had long ago acquired all the most famous poems of Wordsworth, Tennyson, Keats, and Matthew Arnold, among moderns. Milton of old writers was the one he knew best; he specially loved the "Ode on the Nativity," which he said to us regularly on Christmas night. This was indeed the last poem he tried to say on the Christmas night before he died; he remembered the words, but was then too weak to speak them. He loved, too, and knew by heart since he had first read it, George Meredith's "Love in the Valley," and he made us remark—and this was a rare instance of its kind—the beauty of Mr. Meredith's metres and his mastery over them. As a rule he disliked criticism of technical qualities, and, indeed, disliked being drawn into criticism of any kind. He often repeated, too, with enthusiasm, some of Sir Alfred Lyall's "Verses written in India." His taste in poetry was very catholic, and if he liked a thing, it did not matter who had

written it or whether the writer was unknown; it "stuck" to him, and was added to his large store. He knew many of Mr. Rudyard Kipling's ballads by heart, and shouted Mr. Henry Newbolt's "Admirals All" at the top of his voice as he went about the house or walked in Kensington Gardens, to the surprise of nursery-maids and park-keepers. [The same classes in the same district had been surprised some sixty years ago by a little boy who was shouting "Marmion."] The poets whose work he most cared to recite were, I think, Wordsworth, Tennyson and Matthew Arnold, whose "Scholar Gipsey" was one of his greatest favourites. He very much disliked reading poems from a book, and if he could not speak from memory he generally refused to recite at all. His recitation, or whatever it may be called, gained immensely from this fact, for as he lay back in his chair and spoke the beautiful words with closed eyes, we felt that he was speaking not merely the words of Tennyson or Wordsworth but what he himself felt and knew. Thus many of the great English poems now seem to me inseparable from my father; I hear in them not only his voice, but in some sort his teaching and belief.

'After my mother's death, my father was very anxious to take her place and to teach us as she had taught us, and for some years he gave up two of his precious morning hours to the drudgery of the schoolroom. Later on I read with him some Greek and some German. His method of teaching a language was always the same. He put all grammar on one side, and then, taking some classic, made straight for the sense. He once said that he owed Eton a grudge for not having made a scholar of him. In his last years he did not, I think, read any of the Greek or Latin classics by himself, except his little "Plato," which, being of a convenient size for his pocket, went with him on his journeys, and travelled to America and back. He read German, but seldom read it for pleasure, except Heine and Goethe. During his last illness he read French books by the score.'

It was not only with his own children that he could be happy. 'Leslie Stephen, shy and gaunt, very grave and silent as a rule,

was simply delightful with children,' so Mrs. Clifford tells me. 'Sometimes in his house he went down on all fours and gave two of his children and my two, all tiny, a ride on his back, all of them at once. One of my daughters was very ill when she was about four years old. Leslie came with some sheets of white paper and scissors, and asked if he might go upstairs and sit by her for a little while, as he "thought he might perhaps be able to amuse her." He did. They were soon holding an animated conversation, while he, apparently without any design or thought about it, cut out a series of animals—beautifully formed giraffes, bears, goats, dogs, anything—that filled her with delight. I knew how well he could draw animals, but I didn't know of this accomplishment till then. He often sent pictures to the children or drew them animals while he talked to me. But no one who had not children could realise what he could be to them.'

Lessons were a different matter. For some time after his wife's death, Stephen could hardly bear to let his children go out of his sight, and endeavoured to preside in the schoolroom at great cost to his own peace of mind. The temperament of 'the hoop that must go at full speed or drop' is hardly that of a judicious governess, and racing pace is not the pace for young minds. Stephen would have liked to be both father and mother, and was grieved when he was told, as he had to be told, that his anxious and self-sacrificing solicitude was doing harm. But, like the eminently reasonable man that he was, he took the proffered advice, and then all went well. All went better every year. His daughters grew up, his sons went to public schools and then to Cambridge, and the love that he had bestowed and was bestowing was amply returned. The use of the speaking-tube was mastered; it would carry small jokes as well as weightier matters. Then on a happy day the chancellorship of the exchequer was resigned, and the nauseous symbols of office, cheque-book and pass-book, were surrendered. Stephen rarely thought about money: so rarely that when he was called out of the eighteenth century to face the domestic finance of the nineteenth or twentieth, there would be thunderings and

lightnings and the gloomiest vaticinations. The doors of the workhouse would yawn before his eyes; and an hour after he would be making to a friend, who was out of health, an offer far too generous to be accepted. As his children became conversable, the father became always happier, and the steady growth of happiness was not checked—rather, I believe, it was accelerated—by the announcement that the knife must be used.

When there were daughters old enough to preside at the tea-table, Stephen began once more to see a good many visitors. His genuine sociability came to the surface. He looked forward to tea-time, not only because he was a three-cup man, but also because he would hear some talk, though it could only come from one person at a time. Light talk was what he liked best, and, except from a few friends, he did not want any talk about books. He was weary of books before the evening. If an attempt were made to pump criticism out of him, he forthwith froze, and if he suspected that any one was talking insincerely or for display, he was straightway 'bored,' and showed it. For one kind of talk that he liked, our language has no other name than 'chaff,' though I think that Dr. Ward is right when he says that Stephen never spoke a vapid word. He maintained that all good men (of women it was perhaps unnecessary to speak) are fond of a little scandal of a harmless sort. A lady tells me that in spite of 'his limited opportunities,' he managed to collect a good deal. Another lady says, 'He was such a human creature!'

Greatly as I had admired Stephen, I did not know how admirable he was until he was under sentence of death. Just how much he had been told about his malady I cannot say. It was characteristic of him that he did not care to know. He put, I am told, no questions to doctors or nurses. Still he was aware that his time was short; and there was grave reason to fear that he would suffer great pain. He faced the future not only gallantly, but—I must say it—good-humouredly. Not only did he 'scribble' away at his 'Ford Lectures,' his 'Early Impressions,' and his 'Hobbes,' but his one great desire seemed to be that he should not be troublesome to others. As his bodily strength ebbed apace, his

faults (I have not tried to conceal them) vanished. The dross was consumed, the gold shone ; there was no impatience or restiveness ; the clear, strong intellect and the deeply affectionate heart were tranquil ; and the humour, the good-humour, played round men and books, and life and death.

June 1902.

To Mr. Edmund Gosse.

I must say a word of thanks to you. You say that I was 'kind' to you long ago. I am glad to hear of it, though I suspect that the kindness was also to myself. But anyhow, I wish to say seriously and without exaggeration that your friendliness gives me sincere satisfaction. You know partly how it has come to pass that I see very little of any one outside this house. Deafness, and now a serious health trouble, cut me off still more. That makes it specially pleasant to think that my literary comrades keep a corner of their hearts for me. You are so old a friend, and have always shown your friendship so cordially, that your greeting is specially welcome.

[1902.]

To Dr. Henry Jackson.

Thank you very cordially for what you say on behalf of the *Ad Eundem*[1] and yourself. I will say no more about my own regret at parting. I think that when I wrote, I had a rather exaggerated impression of the probability of my speedy incapacitation ; but I am afraid that in no case will it be possible for me to take part in future meetings of that kind.

I wish that I could think myself capable of doing honour to [James Lempriere] Hammond[2] and other old friends of those days. I am pleased that you should wish me to do so. But I have a painful sense of the difficulty which we both felt when speaking of Henry Sidgwick. It is very hard, even when a memory is so fresh and of so striking a figure, to get materials for anything like a portrait. It is

[1] A dining club of Oxford and Cambridge men.

[2] *See* 'Life of Fawcett,' p. 83.

nearly forty years since I was a resident at Cambridge and in the habit of seeing Hammond often, and, though the general impression is still very vivid, the details have become faint. Moreover, my memory for facts has always been bad. An editor asked me the other day for Reminiscences, thinking, naturally enough, that as I have come into contact with so many people of literary reputation, I ought to be able to say something interesting. I had to decline for the sufficient reason that I could not muster up any anecdotes worth putting into print. I have thought that I should like to say something about the old Cambridge, but alas! it won't come back to me, as it ought. Unluckily, too, some things that I remember best were not quite suitable for publication!

(*From another letter to the same.*) Those old Cambridge papers[1] were, I fear, very flippant. I will try to think over the old days again.

July 31, 1902.

To Mr. Norton.

I am just off to the New Forest and must send you a line before I go. I have been doubtful as to the safety of going. However, the doctor tells me to go and thinks that I shall be able to stay through the summer. . . . I have just been reading a letter about myself in the *Nation*, which I understand to be written by Albert Dicey.[2] It pleased me both by the praise—for praise is pleasant—and still more by the cordiality. He is a thoroughly good friend, and I like to think of his friendship—and that of two or three others. I must, I think, have had some good qualities. . . . Well, I am not pious nor a Quaker; but I get on pretty well with my deity—Necessity; and I sympathise to a certain extent with [the] view that there is a certain comfort in making up one's mind to it. Only I reserve the right of occasionally damning things in general. . . . I mean to let myself run to seed in the forest and meditate under the oaks and beeches. I will report progress when I come back.

[1] 'Sketches from Cambridge.'

[2] 'Sir Leslie Stephen, K.C.B.': *Nation*, July 17, 1902.

Oct. 21, 1902 (*Trafalgar Day*).

To Mr. Norton.

. . . Since our return to town I have been little disposed to write. The summer was so cold and wet that I felt the discomfort of our house, which was rough though in a pleasant situation. Since that my state has, I fancy, been getting worse. . . .

I take a rather more cheerful view than you do of my life. If the superior intelligence of whom you speak, asked me how I had liked it, I should say, not only that I have had times of exceeding happiness, but that I have been continuously happy, except for certain periods. If one's happiness temperature could be marked thermometrically, I could say that for many years mine never sank to zero—where unhappiness begins—except for moments. On the whole I consider existence to be pleasant and on the right side, even when there is a good deal of anxiety and worry in the scales. Well, I have had far more than most people. Even now, lonely and worn as I am, I feel as if each day were on the whole something to the good. I am going to send you a little volume of essays presently—one of which I should like to please you. You may guess which![1] It is not one about Trollope, though I hope that you will not object to that. *I* find him dull now—an intolerable deal of twaddle to the good bits. I agree, indeed, to what you say of the likeness to commonplace British society; but it is like looking at a reflection in a dull mirror; all the colour is gone, and I really do not think that even the stupidest British county was quite so bare of interesting people. But I must not write my essay again. . . .

Dec. 3, 1902.

To Mr. Norton.

I write to tell you that I am to be operated upon in a few days—probably the 9th—and, after that, I shall be incapable of writing, I suppose, for some time. . . . I have

[1] The volume I take to be 'Studies of a Biographer,' vol. iv. In the essay on Emerson the author speaks of his first visit to America.

not gone out of doors of late, partly because the weather has been beastly, though I have in any case lost my walking appetite. Various people have come to see me. [Mr. Morley, 'as friendly as of old,' Mr. Bryce, Mr. Albert Dicey, and others.] I have just had a letter from George Meredith about my trouble, which is so affectionate and to the point that it has given me a keen thrill of pleasure. It cheers me to find that so many friends remember me. Well, you shall hear when the thing is over. . . .

Dec. 7, 1902.

To Mrs. Herbert Fisher.

Treves will operate on Thursday. . . . I have finished my Ford Lectures, and can submit tolerably to taking a holiday, though it will be far from a pleasant one. They tell me to expect a great deal of discomfort, but I do as little as I can in the way of 'expectation.' The discomfort will be enough when it comes. . . . I fully expect to get through this, but whatever happens, I shall, as long as I live, think of your love for me and Herbert's with the deepest gratitude and affection.

Jan. 13, 1903.

To Mr. Norton.

I can at last give you news of myself, and will give it as shortly as possible—not having yet much strength to spare. Treves operated on December 12, and his performance was quite successful. . . . I am eating and sleeping well, and, though not quite out of the wood, see daylight clearly enough to indulge in a preliminary holloa. . . . I have had no severe pain; though I have at times sworn. Well, I must leave off. I know that you will be glad of this news and have felt that I must write without delay to give you that bit of pleasure. Nobody will be gladder—though one or two friends will come pretty near you.

I am always,

Your most affectionate

L. S.

Feb. 15, 1903.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I am now up to an hour in Kensington Gardens in a bath-chair. . . . I am still too feeble to do any scribbling, which partly accounts for my having time to write this. . . . Your remark about my 'self-depreciation' is not perfectly unambiguous. Do you simply mean that I rate myself too low or that I am guilty of a little mock humility? I often think that I have a touch of that vice, or rather may appear to have it, and I cut out humble phrases now and then to avoid it. But you should do me the justice to admit that if I unduly depreciate myself, I depreciate others unduly too. It is in fact an expression of the sentiment, which grows upon me, of the small value of literature in general, and therefore of authors—all but the few good ones. I have finished my sheet and am a bit tired. So I will not expand further. . . .

June 15, 1903.

To Mr. Norton.

I have been induced to do a bit of 'reminiscing' for the *Atlantic Monthly*.[1] I am very bad at remembering facts or anecdotes, and have declined into a kind of general twaddle. At least I hope to avoid indiscreet revelations! I presume that you, like me, have been interested in the outbreak of the Carlyle controversy. [Of this much is written.] . . . Still, I do fancy that I understand Froude a little better than before. He was terribly put about by the responsibility, and did, I believe, try to speak the truth, though he may have been misled by his love of the graphic. . . . Well, I should like to have your view in a nutshell; but I will say no more myself. I am a little bothered just now by a downfall of rain which has kept me at home for some days and deprived me of my usual gulp of fresh air in Kensington Gardens. . . .

[1] The 'Early Impressions' appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* and in the *National Review* during the four last months of 1903.

July 25, 1903.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I am just on the eve of departure and shall not write again for some time. This year we are to spend near Salisbury, close to the Vicarage (was it ?) of the saintly George Herbert. When I pointed this out to my children they did not fall into raptures. However, the place is otherwise desirable, I believe, and especially because there is a good garden. I propose to sit in it till I come home again. Sitting is about the strongest exercise that I can now take. I am, however, able to scribble a bit, and am at present working at old Hobbes, a dour, cynical old gentleman, and therefore, as a complimentary friend told me the other day, just suited to me. As for the 'Reminiscences' of which I seem to have spoken, I should not have mentioned them at all, had it not been that I was afraid to be silent. You would have asked me what the devil I meant by not warning you, or words to that effect. No, I have no indiscreet reminiscences pressing for publication. I do remember some things unfit for publication, but so very unfit that they don't press. The trouble with me is that I do not reminisce. I marvel at my tendency to oblivion of all details. I agreed to write—because one does agree. But instead of reminiscences proper, I have really confined myself to general observations. Therefore, I don't expect to startle the readers. . .

[Your daughter] came and was very kind, and brought memories of old days. There are certain things that I shall never forget; rather, the impression grows stronger as the present is less absorbing; still I have rather impressions than detailed pictures. You know what things remain with me.

October 12, 1903.

To Mr. Norton.

. . . I continue (so far as I understand) to descend the hill slowly, though steadily, but without any special jolts or upsets. . . . I have done one bit of work, of which

therefore I am rather proud—another volume of Morley's series, on Hobbes. The subject is very uninteresting for 999 people out of a 1000; but I have a kindness for the old fellow, and have tried to explain his position and set forth his virtues. Well, it will be my last bit of work, to call work, I suppose; for if I do anything more, it can only be for the sake of distraction. The prospect of coming to an end is sometimes cheered for me by the thought that at any rate I shall hear no more of preferential tariffs and protection. . . .

Into the nursing home where the operation took place in December 1902, Stephen took the works of Jane Austen, being not quite certain, so he said, that he had ever properly appreciated her. When he could once more hold a pen, he began an essay about her; but what might have been the last of the 'Hours in a Library' remained unfinished, because that 'delightful old cuss,' Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury, was pressing. The operation brought temporary relief: so much relief that in February, when the King graciously dispensed with his attendance at an investiture, and sent the insignia of the Bath to his house, Stephen confessed to 'a twinge of remorse' for having pretended to be ill. There was little enough pretence; there was no ground for hope that he would ever be seen at Court. The bearer of the star 'was very polite and pleasant. I wrote a pretty little letter to the King, and had a very friendly reply from Lord Knollys. The King has really been very good-natured. So I feel quite loyal for the moment.' However, by Easter-time it was becoming plain to Stephen, and all about him, that his strength was waning day by day.

That summer I saw him in the house that he had hired at Netherhampton near Salisbury. He was wasted and shrunken, and could hardly walk from the house to the garden; but never had I seen his head to such advantage. A friend has spoken to me of the 'intellectual majesty' of his face, and I cannot improve upon the phrase. He was still trying to write for two or three hours a day. He was full of Hobbes; he was

full of Mr. Oman's 'Peninsular War'; he was fuller still of the 'Memoirs of Mr. John Mytton,' and I never shall forget the shouts of laughter with which he told me tales from that edifying book.[1] Many-sided he was to the last, and Jack Mytton was congenial to one of his sides. He came home to London. For a short while he tried to live in his accustomed manner. Then he could not leave his room; and then he could not leave his bed.

He could take to his bed knowing that his work was done. The 'Ford Lectures,' one last luminous talk about the Eighteenth Century, had been delivered at Oxford by his nephew, Mr. Herbert Fisher. A copy of the book Stephen saw a few days before he died. The 'Hobbes,' the work of a man who was dying by inches, was finished. A friend carried off the manuscript and proof-sheets to a remote land after receiving some lucid instructions, and saying or trying to say farewell. Also Stephen had the pleasure of knowing that a sixpenny edition of the 'Agnostic's Apology' was being published by the Rationalist Press Association, of which he was an honorary associate. He could afford to take his rest. And rest it was. The doctors, I am told, thought that the end would come at Christmas-time, and were surprised at his endurance. He suffered little pain; he could see a friend almost every day; he was surrounded by the tenderest love and devotion, and he still could read. What did he not read? I have seen a list of the books that were to be brought him from the London Library. It begins with the names of Réville, Martineau, Brunetière, Flint, Vauvenargues, Vandal, Sabatier, Chateaubriand, Sorel, Pater, Ostrogorski, W. Watson, and Dostoieffsky. Some of our biblical critics are there and Emile Zola. Then when other books failed, he fell back upon the old, old story. Need I name it? He told his nurse that his enjoyment of books had begun and would end with Boswell's 'Life of Johnson.' Pen and ink had to be discarded, but there are such things as pencils, and if Stephen had a pencil within reach, there was no doubt as to how he would employ it. He would write as of old to Mr. Norton.

[1] 'Memoirs of the Life of the late John Mytton, Esq.,' by Nimrod, 1856.

Nov. 10, 1903.

To Mr. Norton.

My dear Norton,—Your affectionate and welcome letter has just come. I must answer, though as you see I am in bed, and therefore scrawl in pencil. I had a kind of accidental aggravation of my trouble some two or three weeks ago. Since then I have been in bed with two nurses and a daily doctor's visit—more bother, I often think, than it is worth. The special addition to my troubles has disappeared, and they think that I may avoid threats of other aggravations. But I feel that I grow weaker, and that I cannot regain lost ground. All that is to be hoped for is that they may let me down as gently as may be, and without much pain. Everybody, I need hardly say, is very good to me; all my children and my beloved Anny Ritchie and my sister, who comes up from Cambridge to see me. I do *not* suffer in any way, except from fatigue, and you may think of me as fairly comfortable and surrounded by tenderness and devotion.

I write fancying that I may never be able to write again. I will, if I can; but if I cannot, I thank you with all my heart for all past kindnesses and assure you (needlessly?) that our friendship has been one of my greatest blessings, especially in late years. I wish you all that is good, my dear friend, and it is a pleasure to say so in words once more, if only once.

Ever your loving
L. S.

Dec. 1, 1903.

To Mr. Norton.

My dear Norton,—Your affectionate and welcome letter shows that I gave you the impression that the end was nearer than it now seems to be. I had the impression myself. I was laid up by a trouble which has passed away, though it has left me weak and unable to get out of bed. Whether I ever shall improve *at all*, I do not know; I cannot improve much, but I may go on at this level for some

indefinite time to come. I don't know, and I don't think that the doctors know, how long it is likely to be. At present I can read and sleep, and have no pain, so that life is very tolerable, though decidedly monotonous. I get through a good deal of most miscellaneous literature, having now on my table Renan's 'Marc Aurèle,' Flaubert's Letters, Sir Gilbert Elliot's 'Life,' Boswell, and Masson's 'Napoléon et sa famille'—which all go down fairly steadily. I write in pencil to save my sheets from ink.

I send you my love and my best thanks. You may write again when inclined.

Ever your most affectionate friend,

L. S.

And now comes the last of all the letters. It is addressed to Sir Martin Conway, and is a reply to a message of sympathy from the Alpine Club, to whom two old ice-axes and an alpenstock had been sent by way of keepsake.[1]

Dec. 12, 1903.

Dear Conway,—I am deeply touched by your letter, and its proof that I am kindly regarded by so many members of the Club. I shall never be able to take part in the proceedings of the Club, but those quaint old poles reminded me of some of the pleasantest days of my life. My membership of the Club has been a source of unmixed pleasure, and of kindly feelings from my comrades, which is one of the best things in life.

I wish you all good-bye most cordially,

Yours truly,

L. Stephen.

From a note-book kept at the bedside I extract a few remarks: 'My books, as you know, are mangy and worthless. I should sell them for what they would fetch, after picking out a few that may interest you. The one that I value most is Darwin's Life of his grandfather, bound up with a letter

[1] *Alpine Journal*, vol. xxii. p. 164.

from Darwin to me explaining why he gave it me. There is a volume of first editions of some of Pope's poems, worth about £20, I think, which I mention because the only one of any value. There is a little collection of Deists, some rather scarce, but all valueless!' This true lover of books, I may observe, had not in him one spark of bibliolatry or bibliomania. His books, if by 'books' be meant corporeal things, were, as he said, a 'mangy' lot, and he did not treat them tenderly. He drew pictures on fly-leaves, and the volumes that he had in use lay about on the floor around the rocking-chair. As to Darwin's gift, it had come to Stephen as an acknowledgment of a small service. The great man had sought some advice about a matter of literary etiquette, and Stephen had been proud to do what he could. His reverence for Darwin was unbounded; it went near to hero worship; and it seems to me highly characteristic; what attracts is 'the exquisitely simple and modest nature.' Yet more characteristic are what I take to be Stephen's last written words: 'Feb. 5, 1904, in bed, very tired most days, and dozing off when awake. I am not aware of any important change lately, but I may, I suppose, continue this dreary kind of state a long time. Kind friends have come so steadily to talk and give me a pleasant hour or two in the afternoon that I must put down their names as I can remember them.' And so with a list—not a short list—of friends, Stephen at length ceased to 'scribble.' Some at least of the friends who went to sit by his bedside, did not think that they were conferring a favour. They saw what was very beautiful: Leslie Stephen with the evening light upon his face, gazing out into the sunset from the best, which is the highest, point of view.

I shall be forgiven for adducing a little testimony, or rather I should not be forgiven if I did not copy some few of the well and truly written words that have come under my eyes. Mr. George Prothero was a frequent visitor, and says: 'What struck me most about him during the last two years, was the way in which his character seemed to have mellowed, the beauty of his calm, brave outlook on the future, and the serenity and patience with which he bore his sufferings, and

waited for the end.' Sir Alfred Lyall says: 'Conversation with him was always a great pleasure to me; he had a vein of fine humour and a masculine habit of thought that gave expression to his straightforward character. He was a man of whose strength and rectitude of judgment I had a high appreciation, and on whose steadfast friendship, whenever it might be put to the proof, I felt that one might have relied confidently. During his last illness, when I saw him frequently, his unfailing cheerfulness and fortitude made a deep impression upon me.' Finally, I have begged leave to publish the following letter. In it Mr. Haldane has said what some others besides him felt, but could not say so well.

Feb. 23, 1904.

'Dear Miss Stephen,—There was something in your father's insight and strength, when I was with him the other day, that made me feel that no man could live long under such difficulties at so high a level. The impression left on me was one which I shall never forget. I told him that he was teaching us all, and he smiled and said, "You will all of you make me vain." He was like Socrates in the calmness of his wisdom. One cannot hope to look on such another again in the course of life, and it is good to have been permitted to be near him.

'But for you the blank and the numbing reaction will presently be hard to bear. Nothing can make this different, nor will you wish that it should seem different. All that is possible to you is to live through these days at the highest level you can in the light that cannot be taken away and that came from the largeness of your father's spirit. And that light will not diminish, but will grow for you.

'Believe me,

'Yours very sincerely,

'R. B. Haldane.'

On Sunday, February 21, 1904, Stephen talked to a visitor, a lady, in his usual way of people and books. Later in the day his mind began to wander. As night came on he lay still and silent. Early next morning his children were called to

his bedside. Shortly before seven o'clock he sighed very gently and passed from sleep to death.

For reasons given at the outset of this memoir, no attempt will here be made to appraise Stephen's writings. Even if otherwise qualified for the judgment-seat, I should be debarred from it by gross and unblushing partiality. Moreover, Stephen himself strongly believed that as a general rule books soon find their level, and that, at any rate, they cannot be buoyed up by bladders blown by friendly biographers. The very little that I have to say I will reserve until the devil's advocate has been heard, and the devil's advocate in this cause is Stephen. 'The sense in which I do take myself to have been a failure is this: I have scattered myself too much. I think that I had it in me to make something like a real contribution to philosophical or ethical thought. Unluckily, what with journalism and dictionary-making, I have been a jack-of-all-trades; and instead of striking home, have only done enough to persuade friendly judges that I could have struck.' He added that if ever a history of English Thought in the Nineteenth Century were written, his name would only appear in footnotes, whereas, had he concentrated his forces, he might perhaps have had a paragraph or some section of a chapter all to himself.

I feel fairly sure that this is too strongly stated, and that Stephen will have a paragraph at the least, if the historian of English thought is, as he ought to be, a large-minded man, and by 'thought' means as much as Stephen would have meant. But there is always truth in what Stephen says of himself; and when he adds that he lacked the requisite self-confidence, and in early days the requisite ambition, I can only agree with him. If in 1882, after the 'Science of Ethics,' he had settled down in a professorship or a secular deanery and had steadily philosophised, he would, I fancy, have earned a larger space than is likely to be his in forthcoming histories of philosophical doctrines, though historians might still be waiting for their biographical dictionary. But histories of systems are not the history of thought. I have said, and I believe it true, that Stephen thought of poetry while he read

philosophy, and of philosophy while he read poetry, and of stubborn fact, especially of the lives of concrete men and women, while he read everything. Now that, in these days of specialism, is not a prudent thing to do if you would see your name in the manuals. 'Stephen,' we were told after his death, 'did not really care for poetry any more than Jeffrey, and consequently was not fully qualified to criticise it.' Of course not: he was a philosopher. A distinguished philosopher told me that he had not read the 'Science of Ethics.' Why should he? Its author was hardly a philosopher. Nor do we think of him as a historian to be likened to Stubbs or Gardiner. The country is well studded to-day with proclamations against trespassers. He who contemns them is no law-abiding man but a vagrant and a tramp. The preservation of open spaces is, let us admit it, a lost cause. The old common-fields must be enclosed that two blades may grow where one grew before. And yet do we not like every now and again to see a broken hedge, a prostrate fence, a bit of barbed wire cut and cast aside? I hope so. By all means let the specialist specialise. And yet is it not well that every now and again a breath of cold fresh air should blow through his conservatories and try the hardihood of the plants that have been reared there? It is a probable opinion. In an untechnical as well as in a technical sense, Stephen seems to me a free-thinker. Do many men think as freely? Not very many. He had a deep respect for professionals. The President of the Alpine Club, as we all know, was not the equal of a second-rate guide. And yet no guide could have written the 'Sunset.' Jack-of-all-trades is master of none. That is very true. By all means let Beckmesser score upon the slate every breach of the rules of mastery. Personally, I have a strong fellow feeling for Beckmesser. And yet before the curtain falls, some one may say a good word for the 'amateur.'

Dem Vogel, der heut' sang,
  Dem war der Schnabel hold gewachsen;
Macht' er den Meistern bang'—
  Gar wohl gefiel er doch Hans Sachsen.

Furthermore it is to be remembered that in Stephen's language, the 'journalism,' which distracted him from serious study includes three volumes of 'Hours in a Library'; *item*, four volumes of 'Studies of a Biographer'; *item*, the 'Playground of Europe.' Then 'Free-thinking,' the 'Apology,' and 'Social Rights and Duties'—these perhaps reach the level of 'magazine twaddlings'; and the Fawcett and the Fitzjames—the Johnson, Pope, Swift, George Eliot, and Hobbes—the Thackeray, Fielding and Richardson—these are by-works due to friendship, or to Mr. Morley's 'seductions,' or to want of money, or to want of anything better to do. I cannot myself believe that many people will share Stephen's low estimate of the class to which these works belong, or his yet lower estimate of these works themselves. But then not only am I prejudiced by friendship, but many of those who would otherwise be the best judges, and whose words I would willingly quote, they also are touched by the same disability. Mr. Meredith, for example, says of Stephen's critical work that 'the memory of it remains with us as being the profoundest and the most sober criticism we have had in our time.'[1] But Mr. Meredith was Stephen's friend for some forty years. If I may not vouch him, I may not vouch Mr. Morley. It would be pleasant to cite what has been written for the public by Mr. Bryce, Mr. Frederic Harrison, Dr. A. W. Ward, Sir Frederick Pollock, Mr. James Sully, Mr. Albert Dicey, Mr. Douglas Freshfield, Mr. Edmund Gosse, Mr. Herbert Paul, and others; but I fear that in all these cases the witness might be deemed disqualified. Well, Stephen's 'magazine twaddlings' will find their level, after being judged by those who never saw his face. I will only venture to suggest one question that should, so I think, be asked. Take the best twenty of his essays—look for them in the 'Playground' as well as in the 'Hours'—look for them in the 'Apology' as well as in the 'Studies'—and then ask whether any of the Victorians wrote twenty better essays of a serious sort? I name so large a number as twenty, because the levelness or equability of Stephen's work is part of Stephen. 'I like him because

[1] *The Author*, April 1, 1904.

he's always the same, and you're not positive about some people.' Also there is a saying of Robert Louis Stevenson's with which many will agree : ' I think it is always wholesome to read Leslie Stephen.' [1]

I have spoken of friendship as a cause of bias. In the present case the danger is especially serious. I have been remembering what Mr. Frederick Greenwood very truly said about Stephen. ' None of his friends were able to stop at friendship for him : the sentiment went straightway on to affection.' As I begin my last paragraph, that is one of the facts that impress me most, and in some sort it makes my task the harder. Why could one not stop at friendship for him ? Why was Lowell's L. S. the ' most lovable of men ' ? ' No flowers—by request,' stares me in the face ; also ' Can you not praise the dead man sufficiently unless you tell lies about him ? ' I have told no lies. I have said the worst that I know. Stephen's temper was ' honestly coltish ' ; he had a low flash-point ; there was a trace of the ancestral ' wild duck ' in him, and more than a trace of the sensitive plant. Nay, I can just understand that one who had not got as far as friendship might talk of a ' Medusa's head,' for shyness is infectious and therefore it is petrifying. Perhaps, too, Mr. Hardy's ' Schreckhorn ' was not accessible from every side. Then why, if friendship were once reached, could we not stop there ? At this point I look back at some sentences that I have copied. I think of Dr. Morgan's phrase—' pre-eminently brave, sincere and straightforward.' I recall a sentence that I have from Sir George Trevelyan : ' He seemed never to think an ignoble, a feeble or a timid thought.' I remember Mr. Lee's ' magnanimity itself.' I think of Sir Robert Romer's word—' A great athlete in mind and body with a most generous and affectionate nature.' ' I do not suppose,' said Mr. Bryce to the Alpine Club, ' that any of us will ever know any one more pure-minded or more high-minded in small things and great.' But best of all, to my thinking, is a word said by an Alpine comrade, by Mr. C. E. Mathews, who since saying it has died. ' Under a somewhat brusque exterior he concealed one of the sweetest and kindest

[1] ' Robert Louis Stevenson,' by H. B. Baildon, p. 63.

hearts ever given to the sons of men.' As to myself, a well-remembered look warns me that there must be no superlatives; yet of one thing I am very sure. Many are alive who will say with me, and many are dead who would have said with me, that to have known Leslie Stephen is 'part of our life's unalterable good.' [1] 'And we may comfort ourselves, if comfort be needed, by the reflection that, though the memory may be transitory, the good done by a noble life and character may last beyond any horizon which can be realised by our imagination.' [2]

[1] Lowell: 'Commemoration Ode.'
[2] Leslie Stephen: last words of 'Forgotten Benefactors.'

APPENDIX I

LESLIE STEPHEN'S WORKS

'The Alps; or, Sketches of Life and Nature in the Mountains,' by H. Berlepsch, translated by the Rev. Leslie Stephen, M.A., Fellow and Tutor of Trinity Hall, Cambridge. Longmans. 1861.

'The Ascent of the Allalein Horn,' by the Rev. Leslie Stephen, M.A., Fellow and Tutor of Trinity Hall, Cambridge. [In 'Vacation Tourists and Notes of Travel in 1860,' edited by Francis Galton. Macmillan. 1861.]

'The Ascent of the Schreckhorn' and 'The Passage of the Eiger Joch.' [In 'Peaks, Passes and Glaciers,' vol. ii. Longmans. 1862.]

'The Poll Degree from a Third Point of View,' by Leslie Stephen, M.A., Fellow of Trinity Hall. Macmillan. 1863.

'Sketches from Cambridge,' by a Don. Macmillan. 1865.

'The *Times* and the American War; a Historical Study,' by L. S. Ridgway. 1865.

'The Choice of Candidates by Popular Constituencies,' by Leslie Stephen. [In 'Essays on Reform.' Macmillan. 1867.]

'The Playground of Europe,' by Leslie Stephen. Longmans. 1871. Second edition, 1894; reprinted 1895. Reissued in 'The Silver Library,' 1899; reprinted 1901. [Some old essays were omitted in 1895 and some new essays inserted.]

'Essays on Free-thinking and Plain-speaking,' by Leslie Stephen. Longmans. 1873.

'Essays on Free-thinking and Plain-speaking,' by Leslie Stephen, with an Introductory Essay on Leslie Stephen and his Works, by James Bryce and Herbert Paul. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1905.

'Hours in a Library,' by Leslie Stephen. [First Series.] Smith, Elder and Co. 1874. Second edition, 1877. Second Series, 1876; Second edition, 1881. Third Series, 1879.

'History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century,' by Leslie Stephen. Two volumes. Smith, Elder and Co. 1876. Second edition, 1880. Third edition, 1902.

'Samuel Johnson,' by Leslie Stephen. (English Men of Letters.) Macmillan. 1878.

'Works of W. M. Thackeray.' *Edition de luxe.* Twenty-four volumes [with an Essay on The Writings of W. M. Thackeray, by Leslie Stephen, at the end of vol. xxiv.]. Smith, Elder and Co. 1879. And subsequently in other editions.

'Lectures and Essays,' by William Kingdon Clifford, edited by Leslie Stephen and Frederick Pollock. Two volumes. Macmillan. 1879. Second edition, 1886. Third edition, 1901.

'Alexander Pope,' by Leslie Stephen. (English Men of Letters.) Macmillan. 1880.

'The Science of Ethics,' by Leslie Stephen. Smith, Elder and Co. 1882.

'Swift,' by Leslie Stephen. (English Men of Letters.) Macmillan. 1882.

'Works of Henry Fielding,' edited, with a Biographical Essay, by Leslie Stephen. Ten volumes. Smith, Elder and Co. 1882.

'Works of Samuel Richardson,' with a Prefatory Chapter of Biographical Criticism by Leslie Stephen. Twelve volumes. Henry Sotheran. 1883.

'The Life of Henry Fawcett,' by Leslie Stephen. Smith, Elder and Co. 1885. Second edition, 1885. Third, 1885. Fourth, 1886. Fifth, 1886.

'A Marriage of Shadows and other Poems,' by Margaret Veley, with a Biographical Sketch by Leslie Stephen. Smith, Elder and Co. 1888.

'Hours in a Library,' by Leslie Stephen. New edition, with additions. Three volumes. Smith, Elder and Co. 1892. [Two of the old essays were excluded, and nine new essays introduced.]

'An Agnostic's Apology and other Essays,' by Leslie Stephen. Smith, Elder and Co. 1893. Second edition, 1903. Cheap reprint issued for the Rationalist Press Association. Watts and Co. 1904.

'The Life of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen,' by his brother, Leslie Stephen. Smith, Elder and Co. 1895. Second edition, 1895.

'Social Rights and Duties,' by Leslie Stephen. (The Ethical Library.) Two volumes. Swan, Sonnenschein and Co. 1896.

'Samuel Taylor Coleridge: a Narrative of the Events of his Life,' by James Dykes Campbell. Second edition, with a Memoir of the author, by Leslie Stephen. Macmillan. 1896.

'The Early Life of William Wordsworth,' by Émile Legouis, translated by J. W. Matthews, with a Prefatory Note by Leslie Stephen. Dent and Co. 1897.

'Studies of a Biographer,' by Leslie Stephen. Four volumes. Duckworth and Co. 1899, 1902.

'The Backwater of Life,' by James Payn, with an Introduction by Leslie Stephen. Smith, Elder and Co. 1899.

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'The Aims of Ethical Societies,' by Leslie Stephen. [In a volume entitled 'Ethics and Religion.' Swan Sonnenschein and Co. 1900.]

'The English Utilitarians,' by Leslie Stephen. Three volumes. Duckworth and Co. 1900.

'Evolution and Religious Conceptions,' by Leslie Stephen. In a volume of essays entitled 'The Nineteenth Century: a Review of Progress.' G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1901.]

'Letters of John Richard Green,' edited by Leslie Stephen. Macmillan. 1901.

'George Eliot,' by Leslie Stephen. (English Men of Letters.) Macmillan. 1902.

'Robert Louis Stevenson: an Essay,' by Leslie Stephen. G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1903. [*See* 'Studies of a Biographer,' vol. iv., p. 206.]

'English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century,' by Leslie Stephen. (Ford Lectures, 1903.) Duckworth and Co. 1904.

'Hobbes,' by Sir Leslie Stephen. (English Men of Letters.) Macmillan and Co. 1904.

Among the books and papers ascribed to Stephen in the Catalogue of the Library of the Alpine Club stands the Christmas number for 1866 of *Chambers's Journal*, entitled 'Up and Down Mont Blanc.' An account of an ascent, which looks like Stephen's work, serves to introduce a batch of stories supposed to be told by people who are passing the night at the Grands Mulets. These stories, with one or two possible exceptions, do not, I think, show his hand. The editor of the journal was his friend James Payn.

APPENDIX II

LIST OF THE SUNDAY TRAMPS[1]

L. Stephen.
F. Pollock.
G. Croom Robertson.
J. C. Morison.
Walter Pollock.
John Collier.
Douglas Freshfield.
James Sully.
Shadworth H. Hodgson.
A. J. Butler.
A. Barratt.
Carveth Read.
F. Y. Edgeworth.
F. W. Maitland.
Donald McAlister.
Robert Bridges.
Julian Hawthorne.
R. G. Marsden.
Edward Bond.
E. Gurney.
R. A. King.
R. Campbell.
A. T. Myers.
G. Macdonell.
N. MacColl.
Prof. [Alexander] Kennedy.
H. Stephen.
J. K. Stephen.
H. L. Stephen.
C. H. Benton.
W. Robinson.
B. F. Lock.
W. C. Marshall.
D. O'Brien.
C. Creighton, M.D.
R. B. Haldane, M.P.
R. Romer, Q.C.
J. Hopkinson.
W. R. Sorley.
G. A. Macmillan.
T. E. Scrutton.
Dighton Pollock.
A. Ll. Davies.
Clinton Dent.
G. H. Savage, M.D.
Vincent Hamlyn.
Sir Henry Lawrence.
Theodore Morison.
Hon. Norman Grosvenor.
E. Schuster.
F. Oliver.
T. B. Saunders.
R. Fry.
J. Hills.
W. M. Conway.
Dr. Clifford Allbutt.
F. O. Schuster.
W. P. Ker.
C. C. Tucker.
A. Hamilton Smith.

[1] The names are given as they stand in Stephen's chronicle. Against a few of them is set 'never came out.'

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